Former DFEMS chief: Formation of firefighters union is commendable. PAGE 2
October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

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Sparks fly as CPA votes on new executive director

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tempers flared last Friday as the Commonwealth Ports Authority board of directors discussed the controversial executive director position that has

See SPARKS on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Commonwealth Ports Authority board members deliberate the selection of Marianas Visitors Authority's Chris Concepcion as its new executive director.

Palacios signs budget law, averts a partial shutdown

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Governor vetoes parts of budget bill; says bill does not meaningfully address budget funding shortfall
» Governor says Legislature has yet to act despite promises to pass revenue bills

With Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang by his side, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios signed into law on Saturday a budget bill for the government's operations in fiscal year 2024—but disapproved several parts—averting a government partial shutdown.

See PALACIOS on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang claps after Gov. Arnold I. Palacios signs into Public Law 23-09 the budget bill for the CNMI government's operations in fiscal year 2023 in the Office of the Governor's conference room last Saturday.

Palacios explains vetoed parts of the budget bill

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has disapproved a provision in the 2024 budget bill that would transfer 24 positions under the Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor's Office and their American Rescue Plan Act funding to the Commonwealth Treasury.

See BUDGET on Page 4

Video provides the first clear views of WWII aircraft carriers lost in the Battle of Midway

AP
In this photo provided by the Ocean Exploration Trust, standing tall above the leaning flight deck, the ship's island is the most prominent feature on the USS Yorktown aircraft carrier on Sept. 10, 2023.

By MARK THIESSEN
Associated Press

Footage from deep in the Pacific Ocean has given the first detailed look at three World War II aircraft carriers that sank in the pivotal Battle of Midway and could help solve mysteries about the days-long barrage that marked a shift in control of the Pacific theater from Japanese to U.S. forces.

Remote submersibles operating 3 miles (4.8

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INSIDE

LOCAL
The CNMI Public School System is thrilled to recognize 36 outstanding students who have showcased exceptional college-level proficiency by excelling in multiple Advanced Placement Exams.
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BUSINESS
E-Land Group has brought their signature pastries and bakery products to the heart of Saipan's tourism district with the opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Cafe in Garapan.
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NATION
The threat of a federal government shutdown suddenly lifted late Saturday as President Joe Biden signed a temporary funding bill.
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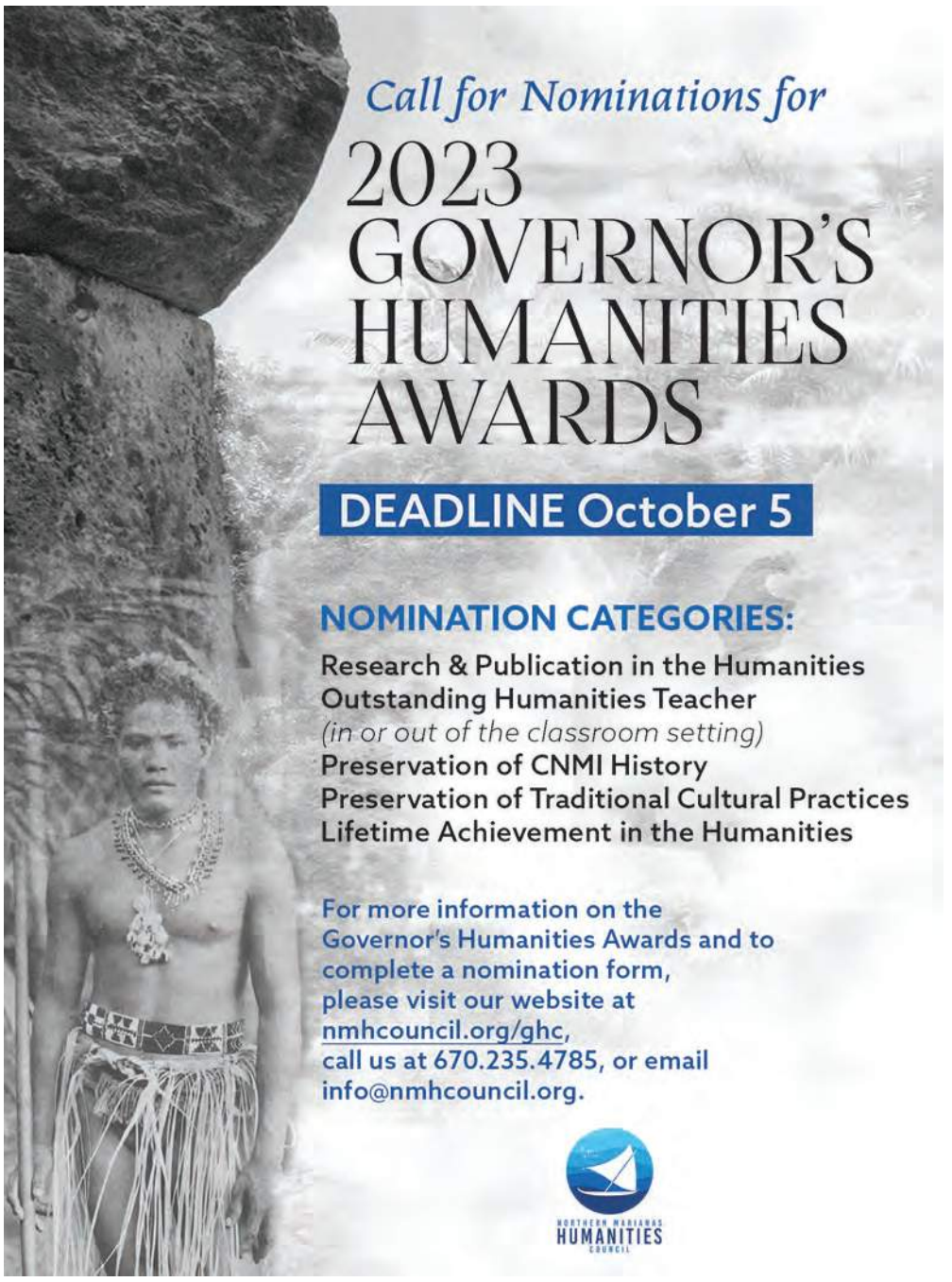
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NORTHERN MARIANAS HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Local

Former DFEMS chief: Formation of firefighters union is commendable

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services commissioner Dennis Mendiola has praised DFEMS for organizing a union for its firefighters.

In a statement about the recently organized union, Sen. Mendiola (R-Rota), said it is commendable that CNMI firefighters are proactively seeking to be unionized.

"I completely understand that their primary objective is to ensure their own protection. During my tenure as commissioner, my public information officer advocated for this initiative. While I was supportive, I approached it cautiously due to divisions within the fire department and the financial obligation. However, the onset of COVID-19 in the CNMI redirected our focus toward prioritizing the safety of our residents," he said.

Mendiola, however, said there has to be a balance between the firefighters' welfare and fiscal responsibility.

Mendiola

"Unions indeed offer advantages such as collective bargaining power, job security, and solidarity. However, they can also introduce challenges like added costs and potential disruptions. During economic constraints, resistance to cost-cutting measures may affect the government entity's adaptability. So, striking the right balance between firefighter welfare and fiscal responsibility is crucial, underscoring the need for constructive dialogue and negotiation," he said.

Overall, he said, he is grateful that firefighters persevered in their efforts to become unionized.

"I hope all parties involved fully comprehend the fiscal and personal implications of this movement. While protection is vital, it may impact personal stability, especially in our current economic state. Nonetheless, I am grateful that the firefighters have persevered in their efforts thus far, and may they reap what the sow," he said.

According to a previous *Saipan Tribune* article, DFEMS firefighters formed the labor union, called the Northern Marianas Professional Firefighters Union IAFF-Local 5335, under the overall chapter organization, International Association of Fire Fighters. Fire captain Paul B. Sasamoto will serve as the president of the local union. The NMPFU IAFF-Local 5355 is the sole and exclusive representative of all full-time employees who are bargaining unit members employed by DFEMS.

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October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

CHRYSTAL MARINO
Hundreds gathered at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe last Friday for a proclamation ceremony designating October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of people joined the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe last Friday for a proclamation and commemoration ceremony to once again recognize the start of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Lt Gov. David M. Apatang, in his capacity as acting governor, designated the month of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in a signing ceremony that was attended by an estimated 300-plus dignitaries and community members packing the building, not to mention the dozens more watching virtually via livestream.

NMCADSV executive director Maisie Tenorio said the annual ceremony always makes her emotional, not only because of the inspiring stories told at each event, but also because of the community's unwavering support displayed at each one.

"...Every year that we do this, it feels so good to know that our community is coming together for such an important cause. …Domestic violence is a silent crime. We hear from survivors all the time who are isolated; they're living in darkness so Domestic Violence Awareness Month is an opportunity for us to bring light to the darkness, to give a voice to the survivors, to encourage our community to be a part of the movement. …We do this work all throughout the year but DVAM really gives us a chance to harness all of that energy and all that support to amplify the voices of survivors, so that we can inspire our community, and empower survivors... and just kind of do what we do best here in the CNMI... support each other, we care for each other, and we unify around issues that are impacting our community."

She added "... you never know who's a survivor or who's a victim or who has experienced it, so more safe spaces we can create where survivors feel empowered and supported, the more they will come forward and report, the more opportunities we have to hold offenders accountable. …Those little acts of awareness of outreach really have a big impact. We truly believe that we can end domestic violence and it takes every single person in our community working together to make that happen."

As per tradition, the 2023 Bridge of Light Award was presented at the ceremony to an exceptional individual who has made notable contributions to ending domestic violence and sexual assault in the CNMI. The recipient of this year's award is police detective Shannon Dela Cruz of the Department of Public Safety's Criminal Investigation Division for going above and beyond the line of duty as an advocate of victims of domestic and sexual violence. Dela Cruz was off island at the time and not able to physically attend the ceremony, but she was present via livestream and had her prerecorded video message shown at the event. Dela Cruz not only thanked her nominators, but encouraged the community to continue to advocate and fight domestic and sexual abuse. DPS Commissioner Clement Bermudes and Dela Cruz's comrades in blue received the award for her.

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PALACIOS

From page 1

Under this budget law, $163.4 million is the total identified budgetary resources for fiscal year 2024. With less debt service, pension obligation, and loan in total amount of $49.1 million, this brings total local revenue and resources available for appropriation to $114.2 million. Including the $4.9 million for the Department of Public Lands, the grand total revenue and resources is $119.1 million.

Unlike his previous signing of a budget law and revised budget, not a single member of the House of Representatives and Senate was present during the signing of this newest legislation, House Bill 23-66, HS1, SS2, CCS1, in the governor's conference room. The new budget is now Public Law 23-09.

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) said yesterday that he was not aware that they were going to sign the budget bill that time. He was at the Chief Aghurubw Memorial Mass on Managaha Island when he was informed.

Villagomez said he has no comments about the budget law as he has not reviewed it yet.

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) said yesterday that she was not aware of the press conference and was at a school speaking engagement at the time of signing. She said Palacios called her, however, to let her know he signed the budget but there are concerns that need to be addressed.

She said the governor also apologized for not inviting other lawmakers because they have been up all night reviewing the budget before signing.

Palacios noted that the budget bill, or the Appropriations and Budget Authority Act of 2024, does not meaningfully address the chronic funding shortfall for critical programs and services and, instead, "offers the flawed solution of punting the obligation" to the Executive Branch to use the 100% reprogramming that's authorized in the legislation.

Before he signed the budget bill, Palacios commended the Legislature for passing a budget bill on time, but noted that every governor would love to have at least two weeks in advance to review it thoroughly.

The House and Senate passed the budget bill last Monday, Sept. 25. Had lawmakers failed to pass a new budget by last Saturday, there would have been a partial government shutdown.

Palacios said the approval of the bill will prevent a government shutdown, allowing continuity of government's operations and delivery of services to the people.

However, the governor said, there are certain provisions in the legislation that are "very concerning."

"I'm very concerned that the bill does not sustainably and meaningfully address the chronic funding shortfall for critical programs and services that are mandated," he said.

Such programs and services, Palacios said, are the Medicaid match, funding for Medical Referral/Health Network Program, Commonwealth Utilities Corp. utilities, Solid Waste Management, Group Health and Life Insurance Program, and the 25% retiree pension payment.

For Medicaid, the Legislature allocated just $6.6 million, which limits the CNMI's access to only $39 million—not the full $65 million.

The governor said GHLI is practically unfunded and the funding gap basically threatens the continuity of the program, potentially leaving enrollees, both active employees and retirees, without health insurance.

He said the other key points is the reprogramming authority that was given to the Tinian administration by the Legislature.

Palacios said under the skeleton budget appropriation, almost no flexibility is provided him to use the 100% reprogramming authority to move funds within the Executive Branch to cover the already anticipated shortfalls for Medicaid, Medical Referral/Health Network Program, GHLIP, CUC utilities, Solid Waste Management program, and the 25% retiree pension payment.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

VIDEO

From page 1

kilometers) below the surface conducted extensive archeological surveys in September of the Akagi and the Kaga, two of the four Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carriers destroyed during the June 1942 battle, as well as the U.S.S. Yorktown.

The high-quality video includes the official identification of the Akagi, while also providing new clues about the final hours of the aircraft carriers.

The footage shows how the island, or the tall structure that rose above the Yorktown's wooden deck, was damaged by extremely high heat and how the crew went to great lengths to keep the American ship from sinking.

Julian Hodges, one of the last living veterans who served on the Yorktown, and who swam six hours with a dislocated shoulder to a rescue ship, teared up as he watched.

"Boy, she took a beating," Hodges said, just weeks shy of his 101st birthday. "I just hated to see my ship torn up like that."

All three aircraft carriers were found previously, the Yorktown in 1998 and the Japanese ships four years ago. The Akagi was only preliminarily identified, however, and limited images were recorded of the other two.

That changed when Ocean Exploration Trust — founded by Bob Ballard, who led teams that discovered the Yorktown and the Titanic — conducted extensive video surveys of the three ships during a month-long exploration of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, about 1,300 miles (2,092 kilometers) northwest of Honolulu.

"We were able to spend over basically three full days on these sites, including two full days on the seafloor, really methodically and thoroughly documenting the entire wrecks," Daniel Wagner, the chief scientist for Ocean Exploration Trust, told The Associated Press via videoconference from the exploration vessel Nautilus.

The surveys were streamed online, allowing more than 100 scientists, historians and other experts from across the world to participate in a live forum alongside about two dozen scientists aboard the Nautilus.

The Battle of Midway took place six months after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. The Japanese navy aimed to take control of the U.S. patrol plane base in a surprise attack at Midway Atoll, a tiny group of islands roughly halfway between the U.S. mainland and Asia. The country also wanted to destroy what was left of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

But U.S. forces intercepted communications about the attack and were ready.

The five-day battle was fought about 200 miles (322 kilometers) off the group of islands. Besides sinking the Akagi, the Kaga and two other Japanese aircraft carriers, U.S. forces shot down more than 250 Japanese airplanes. More than 3,000 Japanese servicemen died.

U.S. losses included more than 300 servicemen, about 150 airplanes and the Yorktown, which was damaged in the battle and then sunk by a Japanese submarine about 100 miles (161 kilometers) away while being towed for repairs.

Of the 4,600 or so men who served on the Yorktown from 1937 to 1942, it's believed there are only two still alive, said Michael Leggins, president of the U.S.S. Yorktown CV-5 Club, a group dedicated to providing information about the ship.

BUDGET

From page 1

The Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor's Office retains the option of keeping the 24 NOPs and funding them directly under its ARPA funds, said Palacios Saturday in explaining to the Legislature the vetoed parts of the budget bill.

In his letter to the Legislature, Palacios said his budget proposal for the Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor's Office was formulated based on the cash availability received from ARPA, which was confirmed by Mayor Edwin P. Aldan. He said the same method was applied to the Saipan and Northern Islands after confirming their ARPA cash availability.

"This methodology is consistent with the Planning and Budgeting Act, which requires the formulation of the Commonwealth budget by taking into account all revenue resources available," the governor said.

Discussions and deliberations on the budget for Tinian were intense in the House, Senate, and conference committee during the budget process.

Palacios also disapproved a subsection in Section 707 of the budget bill that would transfer $531,277 from the Tinian Municipal Treasury to the Commonwealth government to partially fund the salaries of the 24 employees under the Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor's Office who are not fully funded in the budget bill, provided that the Tinian Municipal Treasury transfers each month the required two biweekly payments for the 24 employees. The disapproved subsection also states that the Municipal Treasury shall provide a list of the 24 affected employees.

Palacios also disapproved Section 203 that would require the Finance secretary to issue financial reports, saying the secretary does not have the final records for the Public School System, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Northern Marianas College, and the Marianas Visitors Authority.

That subjection would have required the Finance secretary to submit in fiscal year 2024 financial records covering all quarterly allotments for all local and federal funds for PSS, Department of Labor for Contract Workers fees, Northern Marianas Technical Institute, CHCC, NMC, and MVA to the Legislature, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs, and the chairperson of the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Palacios said the Legislature should directly request the autonomous agencies and public corporations to provide the information relating to quarterly allotments for all local and federal funds.

The governor said the Department of Labor's Contract Workers fee records will be included in the fund status report requirements in Section 801 of the budget bill.

On Section 601 referring to utilities, Palacios disapproved a subsection as he emphasized that, although he has been given 100% reprogramming authority over the appropriation for the Executive Branch, the stark reality of the budget bill severely limits what he can chip off the skeleton appropriation to close the budget gap for all under-appropriated programs, including the underfunded utilities expenditure for the Executive Branch departments and agencies.

The disapproved subsection states that, except for the Judiciary and Legislature, all utilities, including that of the municipalities of Rota, Tinian, Saipan, and the Northern Islands shall be paid by the central government.

The subsection also further states that any shortfall of utility payments of the Judiciary and Legislature shall be paid by the central government.

The governor said he is left with no alternative but to disapprove the provisions that would strap onto the already underfunded Executive Branch utilities account, the additional obligation to cover any budget shortfall for the utilities of the Judiciary and Legislature, and the municipal governments.

"The budget process as designed by Commonwealth law provides for a realistic and rational approach to financing the operational needs of the government with adequate resources. Section 601 is wholly incompatible with that approach," he said.

Palacios reminded the Legislature that the timely payment of the government's use of CUC utility services is being monitored by the U.S. District Court for the NMI in the U.S. against CUC and Commonwealth case.

Although the central government's past due account has been significantly reduced, the Judiciary still has a substantial past due amount, he said.

The governor noted that CHCC, a public corporation, has a staggering $57 million past due for CUC utility services that must be addressed collaboratively with CHCC to settle the outstanding balance.

The other disapproved provisions or parts pertain to the management of funds, legal holidays, excepted service employee, reduction of work hours, Judiciary advance allotment, other programs requirements, reporting requirements, additional penalties and sanctions, and outside sources.

SPARKS

From page 1

been officially offered to Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher Concepcion.

Despite the Palacios-Apatang administration's request to refrain from selecting a new executive director in place of former director Christopher Tenorio, majority of the CPA board of directors voted last Friday to offer the position to MVA's Concepcion.

Sparks flew when CPA board member (and one of the applicants for the position) Antonio Cabrera chimed in during the board's deliberation process.

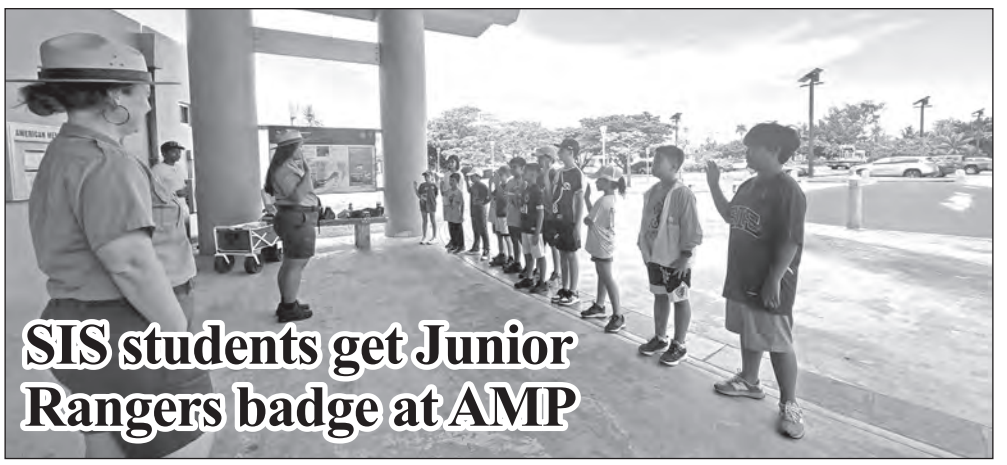
Cabrera first brought up his concerns about how the board handled the selection process for a new executive director—by creating an ad-hoc committee consisting of government and private sector representatives who essentially selected three applicants who were recommended to the board—before he shared his insight on the board's selection of Concepcion.

"I'm sure you're aware why CPA is an autonomous agency: to insulate itself from conflict of interests, and corruption by government officials and private sector entities. Now, including outsiders to select or recommend the best candidates for this position, is undesirable and unnecessary. By including private and government sectors in CPA's decision-making, [this] is a recipe for disaster," he said.

Before recusing himself, Cabrera stated that the new executive director has to be well versed in the issues of all the CNMI ports and he believes Concepcion isn't.

"I would like to see an executive director that is 'very qualified,' and we have had that in the past, and not just take anyone off of the street. The new executive director has to be mindful about what is going on at both the seaport and airports [on] all three islands. He has to multi-task, but he [Concepcion] doesn't have any background or experience; it's a disaster! That's all I want to express. Let's be mindful that this agency is one of the best in the CNMI," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com



SIS students get Junior Rangers badge at AMP

SIS

Saipan International School students are sworn in as Junior Rangers.

SIS

Saipan International School students visit the AMP Museum after receiving their ranger badges.

Fourth grade students of Saipan International School were very proud to all earn their first Junior Ranger badges at American Memorial Park. Eddie Cao shouted, "This is the best day ever!" He has proudly been wearing his badge since we went on the field trip.

Students who love to explore can earn Junior Ranger badges as they discover nature's treasures throughout the U.S. national parks. The parks want to foster the natural curiosity of kids by offering a free educational program. The National Park Service's Junior Ranger Program is a great opportunity to have fun while learning about nature and wildlife, and many of the badges can be completed at home or online.

The National Parks system offers a wonderful opportunity to all 4th graders in the United States through the Open Outdoors program. Part of this program is each child gets a special pass to visit National Parks throughout the year for free with their families. All fourth graders can get a year's worth of free park admission! Every year, beginning Sept. 1, all students in the fourth grade can get an Open Outdoors pass. You can fill out the form at www.everykidoutdoors.gov.

Many of SIS' students won't be able to travel to the mainland this school year to take advantage of this program, but after earning their first badge at AMP they have made it a goal to see how many other Junior Ranger badges they can receive throughout the year. The next class badge will be the Night Explorer badge.

SIS students were lucky to take part in the Open Outdoors for Kids Program.

"It was created so fourth graders, and their families could discover our wildlife, resources, and history for free. Our country is full of dazzling landscapes where you can play and learn. They protect our wildlife and resources. They let us look into the past and protect our history. Keeping them public supports a healthy planet," said SIS headmaster Dr. Ron Snyder.

Through this program, SIS fourth graders were able to have rangers come to school to teach a lesson about the National Parks system as well as our own park right here on Saipan. We were then able to go to the park and make a stop at Sugar King Park to learn more about the history of World War II on our island.

"The students left so excited with all they learned and eager to learn even more about other parks in the near future," added Snyder. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK • Saipan, MP 96950-1220
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold a **Special Board meeting** on **Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building to consider the following agenda. Public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
   A. Call to Order
   B. Roll Call
   C. Reading of Notice Calling Special Meeting
   D. Adoption of Agenda

II. Emergency Procurement for Rota Power Generation

III. Public Comments*

IV. Executive Session**

V. Adjournment

* Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.
** Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board of Directors may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: September 21, 2023 **CLOSING DATE: October 06, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.**

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary
2023-021	CDBG-DR Construction Inspector- Rota	$25,000.00-$30,000.00 per annum- Ungraded

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net or at the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: NMHC Rota Field Office located in Sinapalo, Rota; NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

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CPA Concession No.: TAD-2023-01-02

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed bids, subject to the terms and conditions of the Invitation for Bid (the "IFB"), and other contract provisions, for bids from firms, companies, and/or corporations for Advertising Opportunities at the Francisco Manglona Borja/Tinian International Airport.

The IFB will be issued and available for pick-up beginning September 27, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, at the Administration Office, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport or at the CPA Office located at the Francisco Manglona Borja/ Tinian International Airport. CPA offices are closed every other Monday beginning Monday, October 2, 2023 for austerity reasons and also on holidays. The IFB includes layouts of the advertisement area and other requirements. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Prospective bidders will be required to pay an administrative fee of $100.00 for costs associated with handling and consideration of the bid.

Questions and/or clarification concerning this project shall be in writing and sent to the attention of the Tinian Port Manager, Antonio L. Borja through email at alborja@cnmiports.com with copy to Joy Ann Tenorio at joy.tenorio@cnmiports.com no later than October 11, 2023.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "INVITATION FOR BID SUBMISSION: CONFIDENTIAL, ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CPA-IFB-005-23." One (1) original and two (2) copies of the bid must be submitted no later than 2:00 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time, October 31, 2023, to the Authority Administration Section, Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

Bids will be opened on October 31, 2023, at 3:00p.m. at the Commonwealth Ports Authority Meeting Room, Saipan International Airport. Bids are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee. The concessions are for the right to advertise at certain designated locations within the Francisco Manglona Borja/Tinian International Airport for a period of two (2) years and requires the concessionaire to operate such concession to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so, would be in CPA's best interest. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

9/25/2023
Date

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447 • Fax. (670) 234-9021 • Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: www.nmhcgov.net

Arnold I. Palacios
Governor

David M. Apatang
Lt. Governor

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This ad is paid for by NMHC funds.

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is the agency authorized to allocate $2,186,599 of Low Incoming Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in the CNMI. The United States 1986 Tax Reform Act created the federal low-income housing tax credit program under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) to assist with the development of low-income rental housing by providing qualified owners with credit to offset their federal tax obligations. The LIHTC is available to owners/developers of qualifying buildings and projects that meet certain low-income occupancy and rent restrictions.

Section 42 of the Code provides that the CNMI prepare a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to determine housing priorities and to give preference to projects serving the lowest income tenants and projects obligated to serve qualified tenants for the longest periods. The QAP must incorporate selection criteria, which include project location, housing need characteristics, sponsor characteristics, tenant populations with special needs, and public housing waiting lists. There are no changes from the previous QAP which included capital needs assessment, limiting developer fees, and income averaging.

Application for Credits

Owners/Developers wishing to apply for the Credits may obtain and complete a LIHTC Application. The LIHTC Application will be available on the NMHC's website at www.nmhcgov.net by selecting the "LIHTC Tab".

Owners/Developers must file the completed LIHTC Application along with the **$2,500.00 Application Fee** at NMHC's Office by the Application Deadline of **4:30 p.m., October 20, 2023.** NMHC staff will then review the applications and will notify the Owners/Developers of any deficiencies within 14-days time and the Owners/Developers will be given 14-days to correct any deficiencies and to provide any supplemental information requested by NMHC. The projects will be scored and recommendations will be made to the NMHC Board of Directors for approval at its **November/December 2023** Board Meeting.

Notification of Awards

NMHC will notify Owners/Developers of the projects receiving Credits within fifteen (15) days following the November/December 2023 Board of Directors meeting. The reservation letter must be signed and returned to NMHC by no later than fifteen (15) days from the date of notification.

For more information on this program, please contact NMHC at (670)234-6866/9447.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Man gets 14 months in prison for illegal possession of stolen firearm

Shawn N. Anderson, U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, announced that the U.S. District Court for the NMI ordered 14 months imprisonment for MD Ikbal, age 37, a citizen of Bangladesh living on the island of Rota, after being convicted of Illegal Alien in Possession of a Firearm, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(5)(A). Ikbal will enter deportation proceedings following his release from prison.

In June 2016, Ikbal arrived in the CNMI pursuant to a CNMI-Only Transitional Worker (CW-1) visa. A CW-1 is a nonimmigrant visa that allows employers in the CNMI to apply for permission to employ individuals who are otherwise ineligible to work under other nonimmigrant worker categories. Following the expiration of his visa in January 2017, Ikbal remained on the island of Rota without lawful immigration status. In October 2021, Ikbal entered the home of another without permission and threatened to kill occupants. Ikbal was subsequently charged in local court for trespassing and assault, then released on bail.

During May 2022, police on Rota received a report that Ikbal was in possession of a firearm. Officers from the CNMI Department of Public Safety searched the island for Ikbal. After nine hours, they located Ikbal hiding in a jungle area, armed with a stolen .40-caliber handgun containing a fully loaded magazine. The firearm was a service weapon issued to a Rota police officer. The gun was reported stolen a week prior.

"Federal law prohibits foreign nationals from possessing firearms and ammunition except in limited circumstances," stated Anderson. "These cases will be aggressively prosecuted by our office in an effort to keep our communities safe from gun crime."

The CNMI Department of Public Safety, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, and U.S. Homeland Security Investigations investigated this case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Albert S. Flores Jr. in the District of the Northern Mariana Islands prosecuted this case. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by the NMHC with HUD funds.

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS 09/19/23

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan MP, 96950
Telephone(s): (670)234-9447/6866

These notices shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after October 05, 2023, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington D.C., for the release of Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 P.L. 116-20, enacted on January 27, 2020, announced via Federal Register Notice, to undertake the following activity and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
CNMI Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM) 200-foot new replacement tower project.	Replacement of tower	Mt. Tapochau, Saipan	Approximately $1,883,100.00 of CDBG-DR funds; no other funds are to be used.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) website at www.nmhcgov.net or NMHC Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com ; or on file at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan or NMHC CDBG-DR Office in Beach Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, examined during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI Holidays, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. You may submit comments to the following options: via mail to P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan or drop-box located in front of the building; and via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net. All comments received by **October 04, 2023, 4:30 p.m.** will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing the submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Arnold I. Palacios consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and related laws and authorities and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Washington D.C will accept objections to its release of fund and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of **fifteen days** following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to Ms. Tennille Smith Parker, DRSI Division Director, HUD, via email at Tennille.S.Parker@hud.gov or via telephone (202)402-4649. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor of the CNMI

COMMONWEALTH MUSEUM
Office of the Governor
Garapan, Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 et seq, as amended, the Commonwealth Museum Board of Governors is hereby giving notice of its regular board meeting, to be held on, Thursday, October 05, 2023, at 9:00a.m. at the Commonwealth Museum Building in Garapan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda

II. Public Comment
III. Election of Officers: Chairman & Vice Chairman
IV. Executive Session
V. Miscellaneous
VI. Next Board Meeting
VII. Adjournment

Oscar M. Babauta
Chairman, Pro Temp
Special Assistance for Administration

Supreme Court affirms Zhang's vandalism conviction

The Supreme Court affirmed the criminal conviction and sentence in *Commonwealth vs. Shabgua Zhang* last Sept. 29. The trial court found Zhang guilty of vandalism after he damaged the window of the Ports Police Office at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport with a rock.

In affirming the conviction and sentence, the Supreme Court held that federal law 18 U.S.C. § 37, criminalizing certain violent conduct at international airports, does not prevent 6 CMC § 1805(a), criminalizing vandalism, from being enforced at the airport. It also held that 6 CMC § 1805(a) is a general intent crime, requiring that the trial court find the defendant "intended to act" when he violated the law.

The court also denied Zhang's allegations that due process requires non-English speaking defendants to be provided with written translations of trial proceedings and court documents. The court clarified that due process does not require written translation, except in narrow circumstances to protect other constitutional rights at trial. Zhang's access to a court-qualified interpreter satisfied due process concerns. The Supreme Court affirms the conviction and sentence. ***(PR)***

Yap's Ruwepin wins 2023 HLA/PIALA Karen Peacock Memorial Award

Erica Ruwepin of Yap of the Federated States of Micronesia has been selected as this year's recipient of the 2023 Dr. Karen Peacock Memorial Award.

This award is funded by the Hawaii Library Association and the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives, and Museums. Ruwepin will represent HLA/PIALA in the 32nd Annual PIALA Conference "Re-evaluate, Re-focus, Re-connect: Adapting to the New Norm in the Pacific," to be held in Koror, Republic of Palau, from Nov. 13 to 17, 2023. Moreover, Ruwepin will be a featured presenter during the PIALA Conference, as well as a contributor to HLA's newsletter *Kolekole* for the winter/spring 2024 or summer 2024 issue.

Ruwepin has been a librarian at the Yap State Public Library for over 10 years. Her experience in attending PIALA conferences has helped improve the work she does back home. "Attending the PIALA conference is the only opportunity for me to learn new ideas, meet experts, network with other people in my field, and, importantly, stay updated with new trends," said Ruwepin.

PIALA

Erica Ruwepin, a librarian at the Yap State Public Library for over 10 years, is the recipient of the 2023 Dr. Karen Peacock Memorial Award.

The Dr. Karen Peacock Memorial Award was named in honor of Dr. Karen M. Peacock, who passed away in 2010. She was professor emeritus and retired curator of the Pacific Collection, Hamilton Library, University of Hawaii at Manoa. Born in Richmond, Indiana, Peacock spent her childhood years in Palau, Pohnpei, and Saipan in Micronesia, where her father, Daniel J. Peacock, served as the director of library services. Peacock was devoted to the Pacific, especially Micronesia. She gave a great deal of her time and energy to supporting the work of Pacific libraries, archives, and museums and advising and mentoring many of the islanders with whom she came into contact. As one of the founding members of the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives, and Museums, Peacock participated in many annual conferences throughout the region. The Hawaii Library Association and the Pacific Island Association of Libraries, Archives, and Museums are pleased to honor the legacy of Peacock by annually supporting this award.

PIALA president Erlinda C. Naputi shared, "As we celebrate 25 years of the HLA/PIALA partnership this year, the HLA/PIALA partnership has been a tremendous asset to the indigenous people from the respective islands in Micronesia. It has assisted in the development of the local library, museum, and archive capacity, providing training and resources to archivists, curators, librarians, and their teams. The partnership has also helped to promote the use of libraries, archives, and museums by indigenous people and has raised awareness of their importance in the community. As a result of the partnership, libraries, museums, and archives in Micronesia are now better able to serve the needs of their communities, and indigenous people have greater access to information and resources.

Again, on behalf of the Hawaii Library Association and the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives, and Museums, we are honored to congratulate Yap Public Library's Head Librarian Ms. Erica Ruwepin from Yap, Federated States of Micronesia on being this year's HLA/PIALA Dr. Karen Peacock Memorial Award recipient! Cheers!"

PIALA is a Pacific regional association established in 1991 and formed to address the needs of Pacific librarians, archivists, museum staff and other information professionals, with a special geographic focus on Micronesia.

Meaning "tiny islands," Micronesia comprises some 2,200 little volcanic and coral islands spread throughout 4,500,000 square miles of Pacific Ocean. Lying west of Hawaii, east of the Philippines, south of Japan and north of Australia, the total land mass of all these tropical islands is less than 1,200 square miles with an estimated population of 555,013. The task of organizing a regional association, given this vast geographic setting and the lack of fast, reliable and inexpensive communication makes for many challenges. Hence, PIALA.

The seeds for PIALA were planted during the CNMI Governor's Conference for Libraries and Information Services, held on Saipan in October 1990. Hereafter, at another informal meeting held November, 1990 at the Guam Governor's Conference for Libraries and Information Services, plans for an organizational meeting were developed. An organizational meeting was then held at the University of Guam in February, 1991 at which two participants each from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands and the Territory of Guam attended.

PIALA is committed to the development of resource sharing tools and networks among the libraries, archives, museums, and related institutions of the Pacific Islands, development of continuing education programs and experiences, and promoting technology and telecommunications applications throughout the region. Our mission is to enhance the quality of leadership in order to support and strengthen libraries, archives, and museums across the Pacific Islands. Since the inception of PIALA, the membership has grown to 66 individual members from over 35 institutions representing countries and U.S. territories including Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia: Kosrae, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Palau, Tinian, Rota, Saipan, Guam, Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Japan, Tonga, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the United Kingdom.

PIALA regional members comprise the following key associations in the Pacific: Northern Marianas Library Association (NMLA), Chuuk Association of Libraries (CAL), Guam Library Association (GLA), Hawaii Library Association (HLA), Kosrae Library Association (KLA), Libraries, Archives, and Museums of Pohnpei (LAMP), Marshall Islands Library Association (MILA), Palau Association of Libraries (PAL), and Yap State Library Association (YSLA).

For more information about PIALA, visit our website https://piala-pacific.wixsite.com/piala-pacific. ***(PR)***

NAP to issue benefits through walk-in service

The CNMI Nutrition Assistance Program will be distributing October 2023 benefits through a walk-in service at their office location in As Lito. The drive-up option is no longer available. This means eligible households will be issued their benefits inside the Benefits Issuance and Claims Accountability Unit Office on the first floor on their scheduled date.

» Drive-up service no longer offered

Please be reminded that due to the increased number of NAP benefit cases, we will be accommodating recipients scheduled on assigned dates.

Issuance Schedule for Saipan will be on the following dates from 8am to 3pm:

- Oct. 2, 2023, Monday—case records ending with "1"
- Oct. 3, 2023, Tuesday—case records ending with "2"
- Oct. 4, 2023, Wednesday—case records ending with "3"
- Oct. 5, 2023, Thursday—case records ending with "4"
- Oct. 6, 2023, Friday—case records ending with "5"
- Oct. 10, 2023, Tuesday—case records ending with "6"
- Oct. 11, 2023, Wednesday—case records ending with "7"
- Oct. 12, 2023, Thursday—case records ending with "8"
- Oct. 13, 2023, Friday—case records ending with "9"
- Oct. 16, 2023, Monday—case records ending with "0"
- Oct. 17, 2023, Tuesday—for households who missed their allotted schedule or were unable to pick up their benefits.

For inquiries, please contact the NAP office at 237-2800. ***(PR)***

US Labor recovers more than $37K from Wendy's Naval Base Guam

GUAM—U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division investigators found the operator of a Wendy's restaurant franchise at Naval Base Guam did not pay required health and welfare benefits to its service contract workers.

The division investigation recovered $37,529 in health and welfare benefits owed to 56 current and former employees by the Dededo-based employer, who violated federal contract labor regulations under the McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act. The workers were employed under a $2.6 million food service contract awarded to franchisee by the U.S. Navy through its Exchange Service Command for a 10-year period.

"The Wage and Hour Division is committed to making sure employers pay workers their rightfully earned wages and benefits under the law," said Wage and Hour Division district director Terence Trotter in Honolulu. "Federal contractors must understand and comply with their legal requirements."

Quick Service Foods Inc. is a food service industry employer that operates five Wendy's locations on Guam with more than 200 workers.

Learn more about the Wage and Hour Division, including a search tool to use if you think you may be owed back wages collected by the division. Workers can call the Wage and Hour Division confidentially with questions—regardless of their immigration status—and the department can speak with callers in more than 200 languages. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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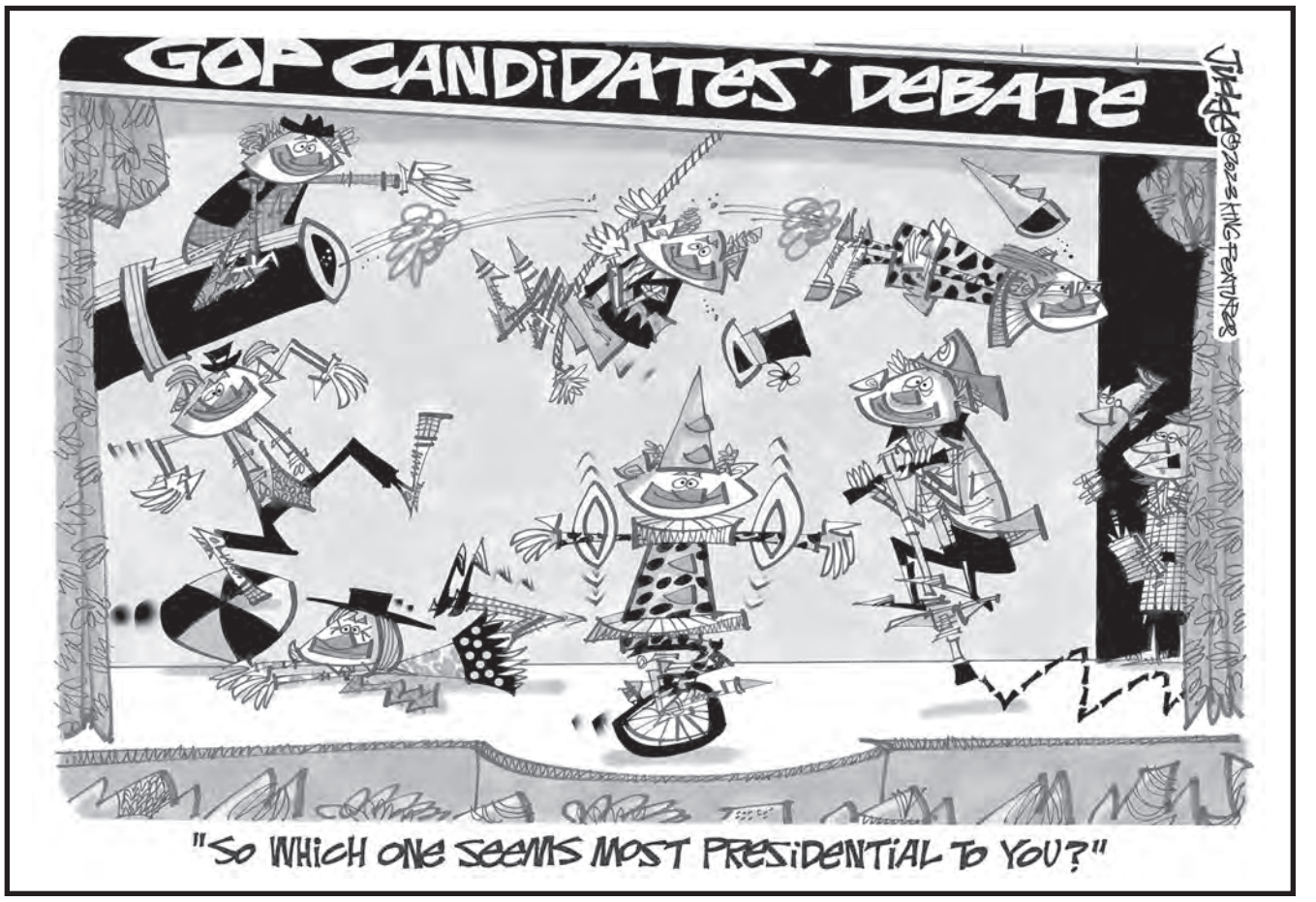
Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association



EDITORIAL

A collapse of China's economy would hurt many countries, including the US

By CHRISTOPHER TANG
Chicago Tribune

Christopher Tang is a professor at the Anderson School of Management at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The Western news media's focus on China's recovering economy, following a significant downturn last year due to COVID-19 restrictions, has been unrelenting. There has been extensive speculation about the potential crash of China's economy, yet few have delved into the critical questions: What is the likelihood of China's economy collapsing? And if it does, what impact would this have on the global economy?

Every day, a flood of articles from the U.S., United Kingdom and European Union underscores China's challenges. The country is grappling with a shrinking and aging population as a result of its one-child policy. This policy, in effect from 1979 to 2016, was designed to curb population growth as a means to alleviate poverty. Furthermore, China's youth unemployment rate reached a record high of 21.3% in June, prompting Chinese authorities to cease the release of age-related job data. By July, the surveyed unemployment rate in urban areas of China was reported to be 5.3%.

When it rains, it pours. The value of property developer stocks in China has fallen rapidly as many property developers are teetering on the edge of default. For example, shares of Evergrande, once the second largest developer in China, have lost more than 99% of their value in the past three years as Beijing cracked down on property firms to curb their excessive borrowing.

There is legitimate concern about China's economy. However, it is important to note that China's economy is not contracting. In fact, it is projected to grow by 5% this year, according to a survey conducted by Reuters this month.

While this 5% growth rate may seem modest compared with China's exponential growth over the last four decades, it still outpaces the growth rate of the U.S., U.K. and EU.

For years, Western experts forecast a "China collapse," notably during the Asian financial crisis in the 1990s and the global financial crisis in 2008. However, their predictions often fell short, largely because they were based on macro-level analysis rather than grounded observations.

In many cases, these predictions were shaped by Western perspectives without a thorough understanding of China's resilience. For example, during the Great Recession,which took place from late-2007 through mid-2009, the U.S. economy contracted by 4.2%, nearly 8.7 million jobs were lost and consumer spending took a severe hit. With orders from the West were dwindling, China's export economy was at risk.

In an effort to sustain the economic growth in the face of a weak export market, China swiftly pivoted to stimulate the domestic market by launching the Home Appliances in Rural Homes program in late 2007. Specifically, the Chinese government encouraged domestic manufacturers such as Haier and

See COLLAPSE on Page 9

Long COVID is real. Now the evidence is piling up

By LISA JARVIS
Bloomberg Opinion

Lisa Jarvis is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering biotech, health care and the pharmaceutical industry. Previously, she was executive editor of* Chemical & Engineering News.

Finally, the hunt for answers about long COVID is yielding some clues. A new study, led by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and the Yale School of Medicine and published in Nature, defines some critical differences in certain biomarkers of people with long COVID. The next step is even more critical: coming up with a way to cure them.

A massive number of people in the U.S. are dealing with lingering symptoms. Two new reports this week from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that in 2022, some 18 million adults said they had ever had long COVID, with about 8.8 million currently suffering from the condition. In that time, roughly 1 million children had been affected—with about 360,000 children reporting an ongoing case.

Those millions of people don't all have the same symptoms—some experience brain fog and extreme fatigue, while others may have shortness of breath or a racing pulse—and their susceptibility to the disease is formed by a likely long list of factors. Those could include their medical histories, their previous vaccinations, prior infections, and even their genes.

Because of that, long COVID has defied simple explanations. And so far, doctors must base their diagnoses on sometimes vague symptoms, rather than on a molecule that can be measured, or a true biomarker of the disease. "Everyone wants a single biomarker, everyone wants a single treatment," says David Putrino, director of rehabilitation innovation for the Mount Sinai Health System. "That's not realistic for long COVID."

A more realistic hope is that researchers can one day offer physicians a kind of "how to" manual for long COVID with a battery of tests to pinpoint what's gone wrong and, ideally, treatments. The new study is an important step towards that goal, and should offer patients needed hope that answers could be on the way.

In what the researchers believe is a first, they did a detailed study of the differences between people with long COVID and those who are healthy (a mix of those who never had COVID and those who recovered from their infection). They wisely excluded anyone who had been hospitalized with COVID, so as not to confuse explainable lingering symptoms—for example, those caused by lung damage following a week of intubation—with the more mysterious ones that follow a mild infection.

When they compared an exhaustive list of measurements, a few stood out as being distinct features of long COVID. Among the strongest signal: Many people with long COVID had much lower levels of cortisol, which regulates our sense of alertness. In a healthy person, the stress hormone hits a nadir around midnight, then rises to a peak somewhere between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. That lack of cortisol could help explain the bone-crushing fatigue experienced by some people with long COVID.

The researchers are already working to understand the root cause of that hormone imbalance, work that ultimately should point to treatment strategies.

They also observed key differences in immune responses. People with long COVID showed signs of B-cell activation and T-cell exhaustion, indications that the body has been fighting something for a very long time, Putrino says.

That result lends credence to one theory about the cause of long COVID: Some people never fully clear the virus. Their immune system keeps reacting to what it perceives as a threat—for months on end. Researchers are now running clinical trials to see if treating people with longer courses of Pfizer's antiviral Paxlovid could get rid of that lingering virus and help people feel better.

The last big finding was that in some people with long COVID, other latent viruses—things like Epstein Barr virus that go dormant, but don't disappear—were reactivated. One theory is that the immune system, exhausted by COVID, starts losing its ability to keep those latent viruses at bay, too.

None of these signals should be taken as the arrival of a simple test for the chronic condition. But that doesn't mean the findings aren't good news for the millions of people struggling with long COVID. While not quite the comprehensive diagnostic toolkit many would like now, this short list still could be useful. Doctors can very easily run a full hormone panel to look for dysregulation and also test for evidence of latent virus reactivation, Putrino says.

And Putrino suggests more data will come soon. Moreover, this kind of research should become a template for studying other mysterious long-haul conditions, like ME/CFS, known more commonly as chronic fatigue syndrome, or long Lyme disease.

Finally, the work offers concrete, biological evidence that long COVID is real. That gives people with long COVID a helpful rejoinder to the skeptics who believe their condition is exaggerated or simply in their heads.

It's important progress for the millions whose lives have been interrupted by chronic symptoms. And it's a necessary step to finding cures.

Advice for the suicidal from a philosopher who tried to kill himself 10 times

By ROBIN ABCARIAN
Los Angeles Times

I wasn't sure exactly what to expect when I opened philosophy professor Clancy Martin's new book, "How Not to Kill Yourself: A Portrait of the Suicidal Mind."

I'd been meaning to read it ever since I heard his interview in April with Terry Gross on NPR's "Fresh Air," and found myself both shocked and captivated by his story. With Suicide Prevention Month drawing to a close, the time seemed right to dive into this bedeviling topic.

Martin has tried to kill himself at least 10 times, the first time at age 6, when he ran in front of a bus. He has awakened in a hospital three times after suicide attempts, been interrupted by police twice, and has tried to die by drowning or hanging.

"Suicide is harder than it looks," he writes. "It seems easy until you try it."

The reason he never succeeded, Martin notes, is that he never used a gun.

"How Not to Kill Yourself" is in part a memoir: It chronicles Martin's addiction to alcohol, his three marriages, two divorces and his enduring quest to be a better father to his five children, along with his suicide attempts. But more than that, it's a primer on literature about suicide, an investigation into whether there is such a thing as a "death drive" and a deeply empathetic advice book for people considering suicide and those who love them.

"If I have one crucially important piece of advice to offer in this book," he writes, "it's this: absolutely do not keep a gun in the house. If you have one, get rid of it immediately."

Ambivalence has been his saving grace; you can want to live and die, too. "For the suicidally inclined person," Martin says, "vacillation about whether one wants to live or die is the norm rather than the exception."

He tells the story of Ken Baldwin, who survived a 1985 leap from the Golden Gate Bridge at age 28 and said afterwards, "I realized that everything in my life that I'd thought was unfixable was totally fixable—except for having just jumped." Baldwin was pulled from the water with bruises, a collapsed lung and the newfound conviction that life was very much worth living.

"Once you start looking," Martin writes, "you find that an astonishing number of people have been improbably blown back up from leaps off cliffs and miraculously survived falls from terrific heights. The universe likes to play such jokes on suicidal people."

In the same way that few lives have been untouched by addiction, I'd wager that few have been untouched by suicide, either directly or indirectly. Who, after all, was not moved or puzzled by the death of Robin Williams, or of Anthony Bourdain?

It is one of the existential mysteries: Why do people who seem to have it all decide to end their lives? Why did poetry's Richard Cory—"richer than a king" and "admirably schooled in every grace"—"put a bullet through his head"? (For generations, English majors have confronted that conundrum. Simon and Garfunkel wrote a song about it.)

As you would expect from a philosopher, Martin cites great thinkers as he puzzles out why some people are bent on self-destruction, either by addiction or other harmful behaviors, which he calls "parasuicidal," or by suicide itself.

"Thinking about killing oneself and addictive thinking have a lot more in common than is normally recognized," Martin writes.

"Wanting to kill yourself is like an extreme version of the relief you find after drinking a few glasses of wine, and the pungent smell of yourself seems to drift off into the breeze. ... This theory is really just an elaboration of the Buddha's idea that the desire for self-annihilation is among our most basic forms of suffering, or Freud's idea that the desire for life and the desire for death are two sides of the same coin."

I was not surprised to learn that women try to kill themselves three times more often than men, but men succeed more often than women because they tend to use guns.

But I did not expect to learn that middle-aged white men are the American demographic group most at risk for suicide, or that Black women are the group least likely to kill themselves.

Given the life challenges of Black women, their low suicide rate is often referred to as a paradox. To explain it, Martin quotes from the memoir of Pulitzer Prize-winning cultural critic Margo Jefferson: "One white female privilege had been withheld from the girls of Negroland. They had been denied the privilege of freely yielding to depression."

I don't know who first said that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem (credit often goes to Phil Donahue), but it's an aphorism that has stuck with me, and something I have shared with many a depressed loved one over the years, without realizing that many thoughtful people think it's an extremely unhelpful thing to tell a desperate person who may well be looking for a permanent solution to their pain, which is not temporary.

And that, in essence, brings me to Martin's ultimate advice about how to stay alive. It's his version of the Stoics' argument that "the door is always open."

Yes, the Stoics say, you have the absolute right to kill yourself, but don't walk through that door just yet.

"After all," Martin writes, "you can always kill yourself tomorrow. Take a breath, get some space: tomorrow isn't here yet. And maybe you'll find you can get through today."

COLLAPSE

From page 8

Hisense to develop new products and distribution channels to satisfy the need of rural residents. Simultaneously, the government offered a 13% rebate for purchasing certain home appliances such as refrigerators, televisions, washing machines and mobile phones. This program was a success: It enabled domestic manufacturers to stay afloat during the financial crisis, and it assisted rural residents in modernizing their living conditions.

Fast-forward to 2023. China took measures to prevent the housing bubble from bursting in 2020 by halting the flow of cheap money to cash-strapped property developers. In August, Country Garden, once China's largest developer, missed interest payments on two U.S. dollar-denominated bonds. To prevent the potential collapse of Country Garden, creditors agreed in early September to allow Country Garden to repay the debt of $540 million in installments over three years. Meanwhile, the Chinese government has unveiled various measures to support the flagging property market, including lower down-payment ratios and interest rates.

Regarding job creation, it is true that many Chinese tech giants such as Alibaba and Tencent were downsizing amid an economic slowdown just like the U.S.. However, China's gig economy continues to grow and employ at least 200 million people.

Judging from these recent trends, it is evident that China's economic growth rate is slower than before, but it is not on the brink of collapse

Suppose that China's economy does collapse due to unforeseeable events. It could create a contagion impact around the world due to the intertwined nature of global economies with China's economy. According to a report issued by The Economist, almost 20% of Zambia's gross domestic product and 10% of Chile's GDP are based on their export of copper and iron to China, respectively. So, if China were to fall, these two countries would face major economic crisis.

Western countries, due to their intertwined economies, would not be immune if China falls. For example, 10% of Germany's GDP is based on the export of goods and services to China. In fact, China has been Germany's biggest trade partner for the past seven years, with bilateral trade rising to a record-high $327 billion last year. This year, Germany's economy is expected to contract by 0.4%, partly due to faltering demand from China.

From the U.S. perspective, it was reported that a Chinese slump would not have much direct effect on demand for U.S.. products because China bought only about $150 billion last year, which is less than 1% of U.S.' GDP.

While the overall impact of China's collapse would be small as a whole, the impact on the U.S. tech sector would be significant. For example, the Chinese market accounted for roughly 20% of Apple's sales last year. Also, a recent report revealed that 10 stocks in the S&P 500, including Qualcomm, Monolithic Power and Texas Instruments, received more than 27% of their annual revenue from China.

In the near term, China will continue to play an important role in the world economy. If China does collapse, it could become a nightmare for all.

Autumnal Appalachian October Offerings

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

I was raised in northern Appalachia on the Allegheny Plateau in the Southern Tier of upstate New York. The Southern Tier runs along the northern border of Pennsylvania from the Appalachian Mountains in the east to Lake Erie in the west. My father built our house along a hard dirt road amidst small dairy farms. Across the road to the east were hay fields, to the south corn fields, out back was a hill covered with mixed evergreen and deciduous hardwood trees. To the north across a creek that bordered our property was a large field used as a horse pasture. I grew up eating game animals, including squirrel, groundhogs (woodchucks), rabbits, pheasants, and white tail deer. Fresh venison liver (in Chamorro *higadon binadu*) was and still is my favorite meat. Autumn harvest meant lots of overflowing pumpkin patches, apple orchards, and grape vineyards. The hill behind our house was covered with bright orange, scarlet, yellow, and tan foliage from hardwood trees of maple, oak, beech, white birch, ash, and hickory. These poems are on my CD recorded in Las Vegas, "Poetry Fun for Four Seasons—A Collection of Seasonal Poems (2003 - 2013)." You will read about the above in poems below. Some poems have appeared in the *Saipan Tribune* over the past 10 years.

Old-Fashioned Orange October

Now it is orange October a pumpkin cliché
plump turkeys are destined for supermarts
as November gets near short grows their day
autumnal dirges now tear through their hearts

vegetarians cook firm soybean curd
basted turkeys in the oven slowly roasting
hot juicy giblet gravy from the bird
mashed potatoes for dinners we're hosting

harvest brings an abundance of things nice
fresh apple cider jugs chilling in the first frost
gingerbread and pumpkin pies filled with spice
covered with whipped cream regardless the cost

candy corn, cookies, and other sweet delights
end our orange October jack-o-lantern nights.

What Autumn Taught 'Em

Leaves of maple were falling
So I caught 'em
Geese in the clouds headed south
So I sought 'em
Buck with a big rack of horns
So I shot him
Winds cold up in the hills
So I fought 'em
Knees of old in pain
So I gottem.

A Wild Turkey Quartet

Tom turkey asks please give me a chance
to eat, give me a chance to gobble like you
I'll find some low bush cranberries
and some dropped apples on the ground
your control over my death is fine
just give me a chance to eat before I die.

The way that turkey flew
and gobbled as it ran
gave me a different view
and changed my hunting plan
it put into my head a serious change of mood
so instead of cold and dead
I will not shoot the dude.

Tom turkey waits for carving
to be untrussed and dressed
moist and tender stays the turkey breast
turkey gravy with giblets
turkey stuffing with oysters and niblets.

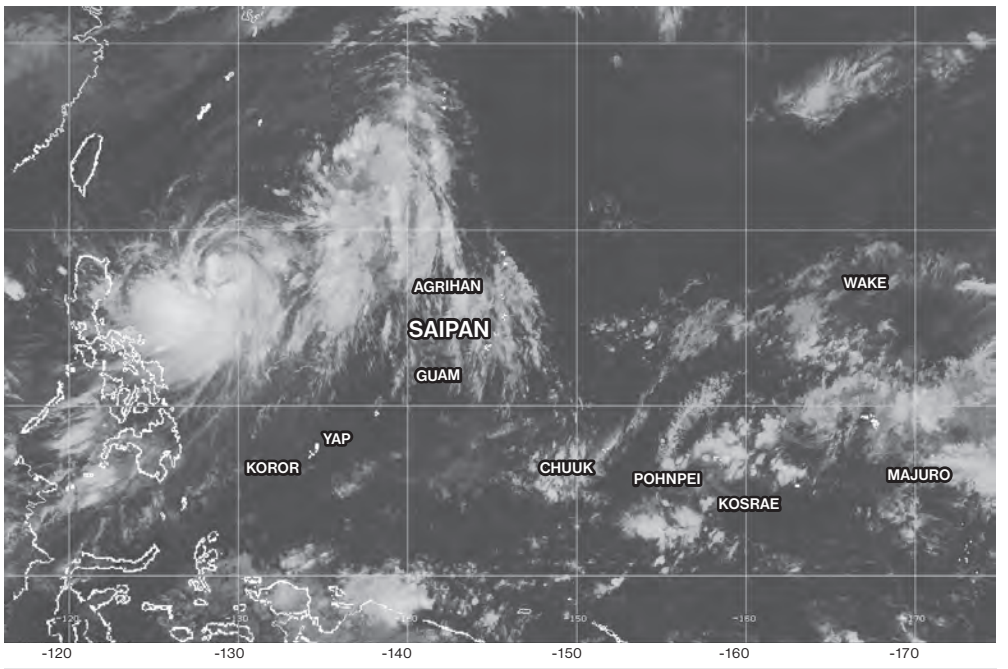
Wishbone! Wild turkey almost gone
as Thanksgiving must next day at dawn
tomorrow's soup is turkey noodle
cranberry muffins a loaf of rye
hot corn bread and apple streusel
fresh whipped cream and apple pie.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds 5 to 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a 50 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
88° 78°	88° 77°	86° 78°	86° 78°	86° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:03 AM, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite indicating increasing clouds and showers over the Marianas. Lightning has been detected east of the coastal waters. Ipan buoy and latest altimetry data indicating seas of 4 to 6 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	86° / 78°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	88° / 76°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	88° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	88° / 82°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:06 PM
Tuesday	6:06 AM	6:05 PM
Wednesday	6:07 AM	6:04 PM
Thursday	6:07 AM	6:03 PM
Friday	6:07 AM	6:03 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	8:32 AM	8:16 PM
Tuesday	-	9:31 AM	9:04 PM
Wednesday	-	10:31 AM	9:55 PM
Thursday	-	11:29 AM	10:48 PM
Friday	-	12:24 PM	11:43 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	61° / 54°
Beijing	Sunny	88° / 59°
Hong Kong	Sunny	88° / 79°
Honolulu	Showers	86° / 77°
London	Showers	63° / 55°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	76° / 65°
Manila	Thunderstorm	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Cloudy	57° / 45°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	84° / 78°
New York	Sunny	77° / 64°
Osaka	Thunderstorm	84° / 73°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	70° / 55°
Busan	Thunderstorm	79° / 70°
Rome	Sunny	81° / 59°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	96° / 70°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	65° / 54°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	81° / 61°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	81° / 70°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	82° / 67°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:29 AM	Low Tide	0.03
9:52 AM	High Tide	1.96
3:48 PM	Low Tide	0.85
9:05 PM	High Tide	1.94

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1 up to Sep 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	6:40AM	Daily up to Oct 7
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1 up to Sep 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3468	7:35PM	1:10AM+1	Daily up to Oct 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

36 PSS students earn distinctions as AP Scholar awardees

The CNMI Public School System is thrilled to recognize 36 outstanding students who have showcased exceptional college-level proficiency by excelling in multiple Advanced Placement Exams.

"Our CNMI public high schools proudly offer a diverse range of both in-person and online AP courses, affording students a remarkable opportunity to immerse themselves in collegiate-level coursework. AP courses empower students to take on academic challenges and are designed to equip them with skills and knowledge to excel in higher education," said Instructional Technology and Distance Education Program director Lorraine Catienza in announcing the distinction.

Many colleges and universities in the United States and around the world offer credit or advanced placement to students who score well on AP exams.

The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on student performance on AP exams and courses.

The AP Scholar award is granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams.

The AP Scholar with Honor recognition is granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.

The AP Scholar with Distinction is granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

The AP International Diploma is awarded to students who display exceptional achievement across a variety of disciplines

The AP Seminar and Research Certificate is granted to students who earn scores of 3 or higher in both AP Seminar and AP Research.

The following 23 students garnered the AP Scholar awards: Iris Bae (Marianas High School), Christine Byen (MHS), Mary Grace Caras (MHS), Gericho Conge (MHS), Matthew Ernest (MHS), Conall Hartig (MHS), Sara Keaton (MHS), Fei Fei Lei (MHS), Sydney Lim (MHS), Koey Pan (MHS), Bomee Park (MHS), Jayden Shin (MHS), Gwanpil Son (MHS), Jaehoon Son (MHS), Daniel Song (MHS), Brigit Len Tabuena (MHS), Danielle Formalejo (Saipan Southern High School), John Paul Garcia (SSHS), Aisha Lansangan (SSHS), Junda Li (SSHS), Gracie Reign Mendiola (SSHS), Jessie Lynn Reyes (SSHS), and Shamira Sulyman (SSHS).

The following nine students garnered the AP Scholar with Honor award: Jedric Aniciete (MHS), Mylan Goodwin (MHS), Joseph Victor Jimenez (MHS), John Paul Labadan (MHS), Juruel Neilan Magtalas (MHS), Pony Tang (MHS), Zenn Tomokane (MHS), Ye Z. Sablan (SSHS), and Andrew Bailey Sunderland (SSHS).

The following four students garnered the AP Scholar with Distinction award: Carson Lin (MHS), Angel Ren (MHS), Anastasiia Shamanaeva (MHS), and Yiwen Zha (MHS).

The following student garnered the AP International Diploma: Angel Ren (MHS)

The following five students garnered the AP Seminar and Research Certificate: Danielle Formalejo (SSHS), Aisha Lansangan (SSHS), Jessie Lynn Reyes (SSHS), Ye Z. Sablan (SSHS), and Shamira Sulyman (SSHS).

Last May, 328 CNMI PSS Advanced Placement students combined to take a total 477 AP exams across various subjects: Biology, Calculus, Chinese Language and Culture, Computer Science, English Language & Composition, English Literature & Composition, Human Geography, Japanese Language and Culture, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Physics, Psychology, Research, Seminar, Statistics, U.S. Government & Politics, and World History. Traditionally, about 20% of approximately two million students worldwide who take AP Exams perform at a sufficiently high level to earn an AP Scholar award.

The CNMI Public School System congratulates these students on their exceptional achievements and wishes continued success to those who have graduated from high school. PSS looks forward to continued academic celebrations for students who are currently taking AP courses this school year. ***(PR)***

PSS

Three of Marianas High School's AP scholars are, from left to right, Jedric Anicieto, Pony Tang, and Gwanpil Son.

PSS

Four of Saipan Southern High Schools AP scholars are, seated, counterclockwise, Ye Z. Sablan, Shamira Sulayman, Danielle Formalejo, and Gracie Reign Mendiola.

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
MVA-RFP-23-2304

Marianas Visitors Authority Representation, Promotional and Public Relations Services for the JAPAN MARKET

Submission /Closing Date: **October 10, 2023 Time: 3:00 PM ChST**

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after September 11, 2023 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference **"MVA-RFP-23-2304 MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY REPRESENTATION, PROMOTIONAL, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES FOR THE JAPAN MARKET."**

Proposals submitted from individuals outside the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or certified courier mail service on or before October 10, 2023, and must be received within seven (7) working days of that date. Proposers from outside the CNMI must notify the MVA Acting Procurement Officer Ms. Carol Chargualaf in writing of their intent to submit in order to receive the additional seven (7) days for the receipt of the actual Proposal Documents. This notice of intent may be submitted by any mode of written communication including facsimile to +1-670-664-3237 or emailed to cchargualaf@mymarianas.com and must be received no later than 3:00 PM., Chamorro Standard Time on September 29, 2023.

/s/ Gloria Cavanagh
Acting Chairperson,
MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Christopher A. Concepcion
Managing Director, MVA

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP23-GOV-42300102: PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT SERVICES FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

SUBMISSION DATE: 10:00 AM ChST OCTOBER 25, 2023

Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), are soliciting sealed proposals for the Provision of Environmental Consultant Services for Capital Improvement Projects funded through the 702 Covenant funding by the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of Interior.

The project package will be available in digital format only beginning **September 25, 2023** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours or online at Vendor Self Service (selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/Vendors/VBids). Proposals must precisely follow the submittal requirements identified in the Scope of Work.

A Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held via Zoom Meetings at **10:00 AM on October 10, 2023.** Questions regarding this RFP may be sumitted via email to Ms. Sunny Aldan-Salas at sunny.aldan@gov.mp no later than 4:00 PM ChST October 16, 2023. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective proposers.

Proposers located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent Form to the Acting Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST, October 25, 2023.**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: (1) Qualifications of personnel or sub-consultants – 30%; (2) Past Experience and Performance for NEPA Compliance – 40%; and (3) Project Methodology – 30%.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

/S/ Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

/S/ Brien S. Nicholas Jr., Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

10/02/2023

Notice for Public Comment
Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Program Year/ IDIS No.:	Program:	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget:	Proposed Reprogramming: Amount	Proposed Revised Project: Budget	Current IDIS Funded Amount:
IDIS# 759	CDBG	PY2021 CDBG Planning and Administrative Costs		$194,083.20	($155,999.51)	$38,083.69	$194,083.20
	CDBG	PY2020 Unobligated Funds available to commit			($1,491.27)		
	CDBG	PY2021 Unobligated Funds available to commit			($507.11)		
	CDBG	PY2022 Unobligated Funds available to commit			($5,824.51)		
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:			**($163,822.40)**		
IDIS# 753	CDBG	Tinian Children's Park Improvement Project	Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan	$288,977.60	$163,822.40	$452,800.00	$288,977.60
		Total Reprogrammed to Activities:			**$163,822.40**		

Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) publishes a "Public Notice" on reprogramming funds from Planning and Administrative Cost to a project activity, which constitutes as a substantial amendment. Therefore, any comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan, and to the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, on or before November 3, 2023 no later than 4:30 P.M. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner @ (670)234-6866/9447.

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Victim Hotline
HOW WE CAN HELP
Safety Planning
Advocacy & Counseling
Access to women's shelter
Referrals to other resources
If you're fleeing from Intimate Partner Violence, please call 670-234-5100
FAITH, HOPE AND KARIDAT
Faith, Hope and
KARIDAT
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

Business

OHAS Boulangerie & Cafe opens in Garapan

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

E-Land Group has brought their signature pastries and bakery products to the heart of Saipan's tourism district with the opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Cafe in Garapan.

The South Korean conglomerate hosted a launch party for around 100 VIP guests for the newest bakery and café on the island last Friday.

Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, members of the Legislature, heads of government agencies, and business leaders headlined the opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Café that featured a spread of what the location has to offer, like the visibly appealing passion fruit pastry, savory green onion bagel, decadent chocolate croissant, and pleasantly surprising apple bread.

E-Land CEO Brian Shin said OHAS Boulangerie & Café heralds a new chapter in the company's journey in the CNMI.

MARK RABAGO

Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, sixth from left, and E-Land Group CEO Brian Shin, seventh from left, lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony for OHAS Boulangerie & Cafe last Friday in Garapan.

MARK RABAGO

E-Land Group CEO Brian Shin makes his brief remarks during the opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Cafe last Friday in Garapan.

MARK RABAGO

A veritable smorgasbord of pastries greeted VIP guests during the launching of OHAS Boulangerie & Cafe last Friday in Garapan.

"In 2011 we landed in the CNMI with a dream of becoming a key member of the community and grow together and I believe our dream is still ongoing. But we felt that we still need more effort from our end as much as we need the support from the community. We very much trust the bright future of the CNMI and that is the reason we continue to invest here. I think this bakery in Garapan is definitely one step closer toward our dream," he said.

By finally having a footprint in Garapan, E-Land can finally say that it has a presence in the north (Kensington Hotel Saipan), south (Pacific Islands Club Saipan and Coral Ocean Resort), and middle (OHAS Boulangerie & Café) of the island, Shin added.

"This bakery started from the comments of local guests telling us that, 'Okay, you guys are just too far' because we're all the way to the north. I didn't realize how far we were until I started living here and now, I feel that, yes, we're far. So after a few months of planning, here we are making wishes into reality," he said, drawing a few laughs from guests.

The opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Café also is not only a nod to local sentiments, but is big boost to the island's still-recovering tourism industry, the E-Land executive said.

"As a member of the tourism industry of the CNMI, the revitalization of Garapan is essential to our success. Our tourists definitely need to feel welcome and need to find something to do and a place to go. We believe that this small bakery will add to that cause," he said.

Mariana E-Land vice president Gloria Cavanagh, who served as the mistress of ceremony, thanked the entire E-Land team for making the opening of OHAS Boulangerie & Café possible, specifically extending her gratitude to their food & beverage, engineering, and content divisions.

"There's so much that goes into the preparation of our products. I hope you see that today. I hope that you've seen it when you go to our properties and it's something that we're very proud of. We want to bring all these products here to make the CNMI a destination you can be proud of," she said.

Apatang congratulated Shin and E-Land for opening another business venture in the CNMI.

He also joked that while everything seems to be in the up and up for the South Korean conglomerate, he couldn't say the same for food and beverage establishments in the area. "I'm not sure whether your neighbors are going to be happy but that's business," he said.

Apatang also appealed to Shin and E-Land to perhaps open a branch in San Antonio so residents in the south don't have to drive this far to get their pastry and bakery fix.

"We need this bakery in the south because gas is getting expensive. Perhaps people from the south can ride a bicycle to come here," he again joked. "Again, thank you and congratulations on this beautiful bakery and I know that we're going to enjoy all the pastries and you know the local custom that when you leave you need to get *balutan* (takeout). [I'm sure] you're going to see me a lot in here."

Cavanagh answered Apatang with a comeback of her own, saying that "any one of these pastries actually costs less than a gallon of gas."

She proudly explained that OHAS Boulangerie & Café expertly mimics E-Land's chain of bakeries in South Korea. "What we wanted to do was bring that concept here. So. if you actually go to the bakeries that we have in Seoul, it almost looks exactly like this. It is something that is signature to us and to our company. We just wanted to make sure that the product and the quality of the product is here for everyone to enjoy."

Fr. Ray Rosal, who blessed the newly opened café and bakery, doubled down on Apatang's request and asked E-Land to open a branch near the Mt. Carmel Cathedral, adding that "We Filipinos, we love bread!"

The launch event concluded with a ribbon-cutting ceremony outside OHAS Boulangerie & Café's corner lot and shortly after Gov. Arnold I. Palacios arrived the much-anticipated raffle drawing commenced.

OHAS Boulangerie & Café, located in the corner of Beach Road and Orchid Street in Garapan, is open from 7am to 9pm every day. For more information, call (670) 233-6427 or visit their Facebook page.

UAW strikes spread as 7K more workers at 2 plants join picket line

DETROIT (AP)—The United Auto Workers union expanded strikes against Detroit automakers Friday, ordering 7,000 more workers to walk off the job in Illinois and Michigan to put more pressure on the companies to improve their offers.

It was the second time the union has widened the walkouts, which started two weeks ago at three assembly plants before the most recent addition of a Ford plant in Chicago and a General Motors factory near Lansing.

Union President Shawn Fain told workers in a video appearance that the strikes were escalated because Ford and GM refused "to make meaningful progress" in contract talks. Jeep maker Stellantis was spared from the third round of strikes.

Ford and GM shot back as a war of words with the union also intensified. Ford accused the UAW of holding up a deal mainly over union representation at electric vehicle battery plants, most of which are joint ventures with a Korean manufacturer.

"We still have time to reach an agreement and avert a real disaster," Ford CEO Jim Farley said. The company said the work stoppages are starting to affect fragile companies that make parts for the factories on strike.

General Motors CEO Mary Barra blamed union leaders for the impasse.

"UAW leadership continues to expand the strike while upping the rhetoric and the theatrics. It's clear that there is no real intent to get to an agreement," Barra said in a statement.

The GM plant in Delta Township, near Lansing, makes large crossover SUVs such as the Chevrolet Traverse and Buick Enclave. A nearby metal parts stamping plant will remain open, Fain said.

Nation

Gov't shutdown averted with little time to spare

AP

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., gives two thumbs up as the Senate votes to approve a 45-day funding bill to keep federal agencies open, Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023, in Washington.

WASHINGTON (AP)—The threat of a federal government shutdown suddenly lifted late Saturday as President Joe Biden signed a temporary funding bill to keep agencies open with little time to spare after Congress rushed to approve the bipartisan deal.

» As Biden signs funding before midnight

The package drops aid to Ukraine, a White House priority opposed by a growing number of GOP lawmakers, but increases federal disaster assistance by $16 billion, meeting Biden's full request. The bill funds government until Nov. 17.

After chaotic days of turmoil in the House, Speaker Kevin McCarthy abruptly abandoned demands for steep spending cuts from his right flank and instead relied on Democrats to pass the bill, at risk to his own job. The Senate followed with final passage closing a whirlwind day at the Capitol.

"This is good news for the American people," Biden said in a statement.

He also said the United States "cannot under any circumstances allow American support for Ukraine to be interrupted" and expected McCarthy "will keep his commitment to the people of Ukraine and secure passage of the support needed to help Ukraine at this critical moment."

It's been a sudden head-spinning turn of events in Congress ahead of the midnight funding deadline after grueling days in the House pushed the government to the brink of a disruptive federal shutdown.

The outcome ends, for now, the threat of a shutdown, but the reprieve may be short-lived. Congress will again need to fund the government in coming weeks risking a crisis as views are hardening, particularly among the right-flank lawmakers whose demands were ultimately swept aside this time in favor of a more bipartisan approach.

"We're going to do our job," McCarthy, R-Calif., said before the House vote. "We're going to be adults in the room. And we're going to keep government open."

If no deal was in place before Sunday, federal workers would have faced furloughs, more than 2 million active-duty and reserve military troops would have had to work without pay and programs and services that Americans rely on from coast to coast would have begun to face shutdown disruptions.

"It has been a day full of twists and turns, but the American people can breathe a sigh of relief: There will be no government shutdown," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

The package funds government at current 2023 levels until mid-November, and also extends other provisions, including for the Federal Aviation Administration. The package was approved by the House 335-91, with most Republicans and almost all Democrats supporting. Senate passage came by an 88-9 vote.

But the loss of Ukraine aid was devastating for lawmakers of both parties vowing to support President Volodymyr Zelenskyy after his recent Washington visit. The Senate bill included $6 billion for Ukraine, and both chambers came to a standstill Saturday as lawmakers assessed their options.

"The American people deserve better," said House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York, warning in a lengthy floor speech that "extreme" Republicans were risking a shutdown.

For the House package to be approved, McCarthy was forced to rely on Democrats because the speaker's hard-right flank has said it will oppose any short-term funding measure, denying him the votes needed from his slim majority. It's a move that is sure to intensify calls for his ouster.

After leaving the conservative holdouts behind, McCarthy is almost certain to be facing a motion to try to remove him from office, though it is not at all certain there would be enough votes to topple the speaker. Most Republicans voted for the package Saturday while 90 opposed.

"If somebody wants to remove me because I want to be the adult in the room, go ahead and try," McCarthy said of the threat to oust him. "But I think this country is too important."

The White House was tracking the developments on Capitol Hill and aides were briefing the president, who was spending the weekend in Washington.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who has championed Ukraine aid despite resistance from his own ranks, is expected to keep pursuing U.S. support for Kyiv in the fight against Russia.

"I have agreed to keep fighting for more economic and security aid for Ukraine," McConnell, R-Ky., said before the vote.

World

Marcos: PH not looking for trouble

» But will defend waters vs Chinese aggression

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine president said Friday that his country does not want a confrontation but will staunchly defend its waters after its coast guard dismantled a floating barrier placed by China at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

Marcos

It was the first time President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has spoken publicly against China's installation of the 300-meter (980-foot) -long barrier at the entrance to Scarborough Shoal which was dismantled at his order.

"We're not looking for trouble, but what we'll do is to continue defending the maritime territory of the Philippines and the rights of our fishermen, who have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years," Marcos said in response to a question at a news briefing in southern Surigao del Norte province.

The latest flare-up between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade routes, comes after Marcos decided earlier this year to allow an expansion of the U.S. military presence in the Philippines under a 2014 defense pact.

The prospect of more American forces in local military camps in the northern Philippines across from Taiwan and southern China alarmed and infuriated Beijing.

After the Philippine coast guard dismantled the rope and net barrier at the mouth of Scarborough Shoal, Filipino fishing boats entered the shallow lagoon and caught about 164 tons of fish in one day, Marcos said.

"That's what our fishermen lose, so there should not be a barrier there, and it's clear the area is within the Philippines," he said. "Our fishermen have been fishing in those areas for hundreds of years so I can't understand why that has changed.

A Philippine surveillance aircraft deployed Thursday spotted two Chinese coast guard vessels closely guarding the shoal's entrance, making it still difficult for Filipino fishermen to gain entry into the fishing lagoon, Philippine coast guard spokesman Commodore Jay Tarriela said during a news conference Friday.

Amid China's effort to play down the Philippine coast guard's disabling of the barrier, Tarriela showed journalists one of two metal anchors he said Filipino coast guard personnel removed recently from Scarborough's entrance to knock the barrier down.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a news briefing in Beijing on Wednesday that the shoal "is China's inherent territory."

"What the Philippines (has) done is nothing but a farce that entertains itself. China will continue to safeguard the territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests of Huangyan Island," he said, using the Chinese name for Scarborough.

Although Marcos has tried to nurture normal ties with China, the long-simmering territorial disputes have put the Asian neighbors on a potential collision course, with the Philippine leader vowing his country would not yield even "an inch" of territory in the strategic waterway.

Marcos's more confrontational stance contrasts with that of his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who nurtured cozy ties with China and Russia while often criticizing U.S. and Western security policies.

Under Marcos, who took office last year, the Philippines has intensified its efforts to fight China's increasingly aggressive actions in one of the world's most hotly contested waters. The Philippine coast guard often invites journalists to join its patrols in an effort to expose what it calls Chinese bullying in the busy waterway.

In addition to China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan are also involved in the territorial conflicts in the South China Sea, which has long been regarded as a potential Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the U.S.-China rivalry in the region.

Putin marks anniversary of annexation of Ukrainian regions

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday insisted that the residents of four Ukrainian regions that Moscow illegally annexed a year ago "made their choice—to be with their Fatherland."

In an address released in the early hours to mark the first anniversary of the annexation, Putin insisted that it was carried out "in full accordance with international norms." He also claimed that residents of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions had again expressed their desire to be part of Russia in local elections earlier this month. Russia's Central Election Commission said the country's ruling party won the most votes.

The West has denounced both the referendum votes carried out last year and the recent ballots as a sham. The votes were held as Russian authorities attempted to tighten their grip on territories Moscow illegally annexed a year ago and still does not fully control.

A concert was held in Red Square on Friday to mark the anniversary, but Putin did not participate.

The address came after Russia's Defense Ministry said Friday it would enlist 130,000 men for compulsory military service this fall, beginning Oct. 1, in most regions of the country. It announced it would for the first time begin enlisting residents of the annexed territories as part of its twice-yearly military conscription campaign.

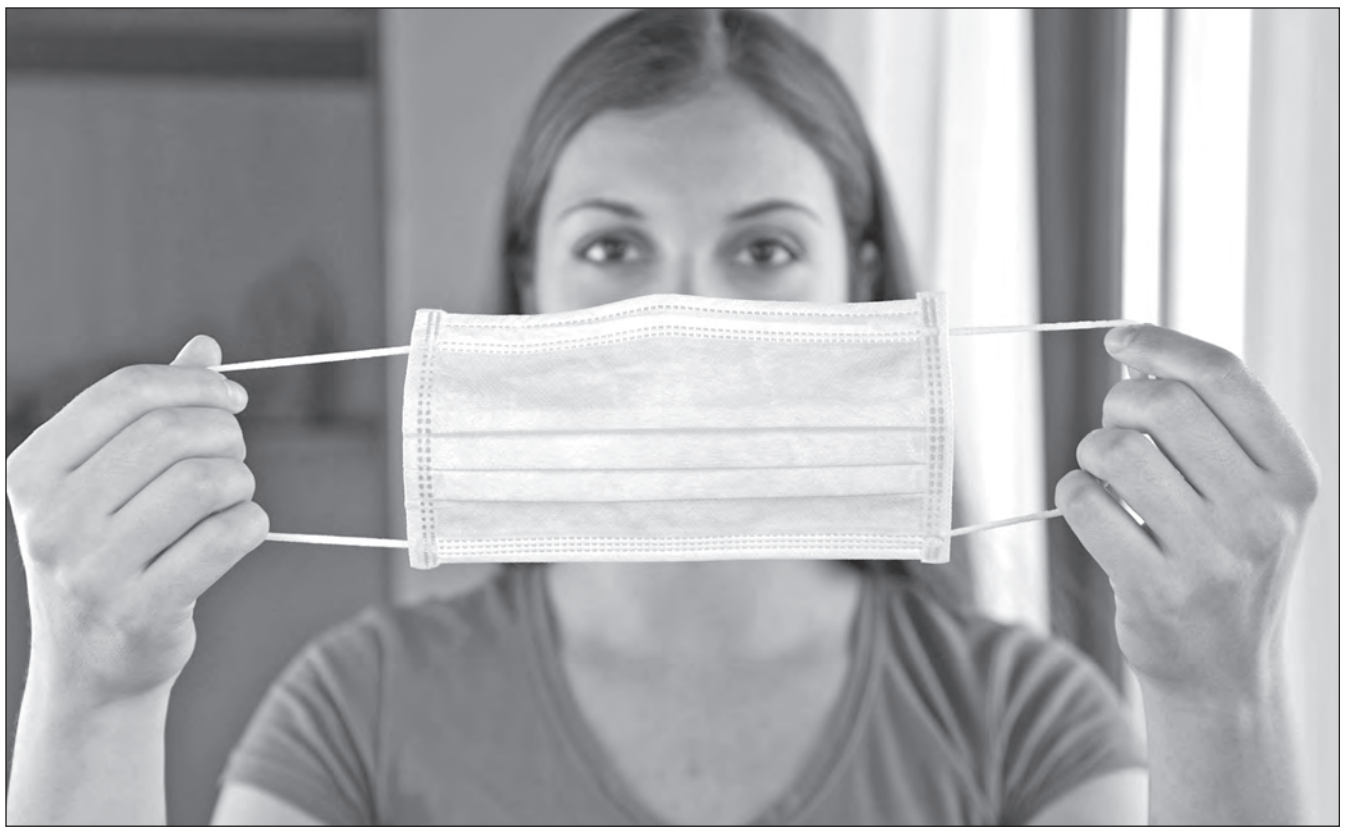
Russia says conscripts are not deployed to what it calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine, or to serve in the annexed territories. However, after their service, conscripts automatically become reservists, and Russia has previously deployed reservists to Ukraine.

In Ukraine, EU chief diplomat Josep Borrell referenced the anniversary of the regions being "illegally annexed" by Russia in a video recorded during an unannounced visit to the Black Sea port city of Odesa on Saturday. Speaking from the city's Transfiguration Cathedral, severely damaged in a Russian missile strike in July, Borrell reiterated the EU's support for Ukraine.

"Odesa is a beautiful historic city. It should be in the headlines for its vibrant culture and spirit. Instead, it marks the news as frequent target of Putin's war," the EU Foreign Affairs and Security Policy chief wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Health & Wellness

What to expect for the flu, RSV and COVID-19 respiratory season



DREAMSTIME

If you're sick, stay home. If you have to get out, wear a mask.

By DEB BALZER
Mayo Clinic News Network

Influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19 are all part of the seasonal respiratory virus lineup. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the upcoming fall and winter are expected to have a similar number of hospitalizations for respiratory diseases as last year. However, they say it's important to note that these hospitalization numbers are higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic when the leading causes were the flu and RSV.

Matthew Binnicker, Ph.D., director of the Clinical Virology Laboratory at Mayo Clinic, says researchers in the Northern Hemisphere look to the trends in the Southern Hemisphere, where winter is ending, to help forecast the upcoming respiratory season.

"We saw in Australia that they had a typical to, in some areas, more severe influenza season. And that's what I expect this year is more of what we saw pre-pandemic," says Dr. Binnicker.

"Whether it's an average year or a more severe year will be based on a few factors: how well people abide by all the lessons we learned about staying home when you're sick, masking if you're sick, getting your influenza vaccination, but also the type of virus that's circulating," he says.

The CDC says the 2023 Southern Hemisphere flu vaccine reduced hospitalizations by 52%. If similar influenza virus strains spread in the Northern Hemisphere, the 2023-24 vaccine might provide equal protection.

Strains of influenza

Dr. Binnicker says there has been a predominance of a few different strains of influenza over the last few years.

"One is called H3N2 influenza A virus, a common influenza A virus that circulated for years. And then, in some areas, the pandemic strain from 2009, the H1N1 influenza strain, has also been in circulation. We typically see those influenza A strains anywhere from November to February or March here in the U.S.," says Dr. Binnicker.

"We also see a strain of influenza called influenza B, which usually causes a little bit less severe disease, and that typically comes up toward the tail end of the influenza season, in the February, March and April timeframe," he adds.

Preventing illness during respiratory season

There are some unknowns in the outlook, including the timing, the specific virus strains and what new COVID-19 variant might emerge. That's why prevention is critical, says Dr. Binnicker.

The good news is that there are vaccines for these three seasonal illnesses, including updated COVID-19 vaccines and new vaccines for the prevention of RSV in those 60 and older, infants and those who are pregnant.

"It's an exciting time in terms of prevention strategies for these viruses," says Dr. Binnicker. "Then you get to the basics: good hand hygiene. If you're sick, stay home. If you have to get out, wear a mask if you have any of these symptoms. And then testing so we know what we're dealing with and can take good steps to prevent transmission to other people."

Common myths about epilepsy and kids

By JASON HOWLAND
Mayo Clinic News Network

Epilepsy is one of the more common neurologic disorders in children. About 1 in 26 people have epilepsy, and 1 in 10 people will have at least one seizure in their lifetime.

Dr. Anthony Fine, a pediatric neurologist and epileptologist at Mayo Clinic, says even though it's fairly common in children, there are a few misconceptions when it comes to epilepsy and kids.

Epilepsy can be a challenge to diagnose in children because not all seizures are the same.

"It's really a common misconception that all seizures are convulsive seizures," says Dr. Fine.

There are other types of seizures, such as absent seizures, where a child may blank out for a few seconds or minutes, and then go back to activity.

"I've had some kids where I've seen where, you know, people think they're acting goofy. And this kind of continues, and, eventually, it gets picked up that something is actually going on. And there are other seizures that look like night terrors almost," says Dr. Fine.

He says, for many children, there are treatments to control seizures.

"It's not a one-size-fits-all kind of deal with epilepsy. You really need to tailor it to the patient and their response. But, for the most part, antiseizure medications can be very helpful. And some children can control their seizures completely."

Dr. Fine says a common misconception is that ADHD medications can cause seizures, and children who have epilepsy and ADHD should avoid them.

"It turns out that that's not true. It's really there's just a strong relationship between epilepsy and ADHD. And, so, if you have one, you're more likely to have the other."

Score your body condition

ON NUTRITION

BY BARBARA INTERMILL
Tribune News Service

Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. She is the author of Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating. *Email her at barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.*

DMYTRO FLASK/DREAMSTIME/TNS

According to some experts, measuring a waist-to-hip ratio is better for predicting health problems than waist circumference, writes Barbara Intermill.

We've had horses most of my life, and I always thought a fat horse was a happy horse. Maybe because the easy keepers didn't need much extra attention.

Guess I hadn't thought it through. At a recent conference for women involved in agriculture, I learned how to evaluate a horse's general health with a body condition score, a method developed in 1983 at Texas A&M University.

Basically, the tool helps determine an equine's degree of fatness, said Dr. Kathy Anderson, an extension horse specialist from the University of Nebraska.

A horse at the lower end of a 1 to 9 scale is too thin, which negatively affects energy and performance. A chubby one in the 8 to 9 range carries a high risk for health complications.

Equines who score around 5 or 6 are generally the healthiest, Anderson explained. These were the horses that didn't have ribs showing, but they could be felt. And they had some fat on the rest of their body, but it was not bulging.

"There is absolutely no benefit for a horse to get too fat," she said.

It would be cool to have a similar scale for humans.

What we do have are anthropometrics—simple measurements on the outside of the body that help determine how well the inside of the body is working.

In infants and young children, for example, measurements of height (or length), weight and the area around a child's head can easily evaluate whether there may be problems with growth or development.

In older children and adults, anthropometric measurements help determine the degree of fatness. Like in equines, an inadequate or excessive fat layer can tell us a lot about our nutrient needs and risk for illness.

Where we carry our fat matters, too. A horse with too much fat stored in the neck is at high risk for a pituitary disease called Cushing's. In humans, excess fat around the middle is tied to heart disease and the development of Type 2 diabetes.

How much is too much tummy fat?

Measure your waist circumference. Stand and place a tape measure around your middle, just above your hipbones, says the National Institutes of Health. No fair holding your breath while you measure. Men, if you score less than 40 inches, you're good. Women, less than 35 inches.

Better for predicting problems, according to some experts, is a waist-to-hip ratio. Along with waist circumference, measure around the widest part of your hips and largest part of your backside. Then divide your waist circumference by your hip measurement. According to the World Health Organization, a waist-hip ratio of more than 0.86 in women or 1.0 in men indicates a higher risk for heart disease and other weight-related conditions.

Yes, these scores and measurements do have their limits. Yet they also help us pay attention. I think I'll look for my tape measure.

Life & Style

Last living suspect in Tupac Shakur shooting is indicted

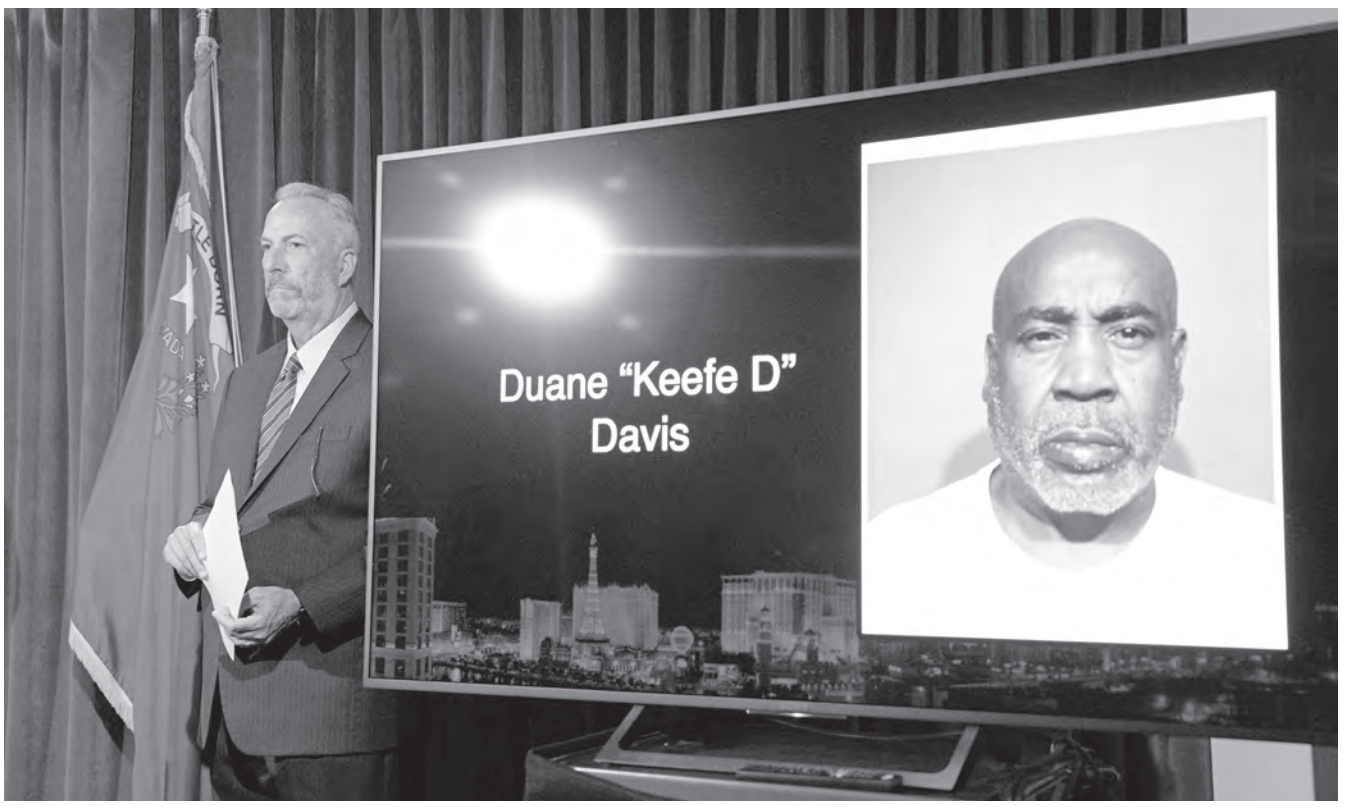
LAS VEGAS (AP)—A man who prosecutors say ordered the 1996 killing of rapper Tupac Shakur was arrested and charged with murder Friday in a long-awaited breakthrough in one of hip-hop's most enduring mysteries.

Duane "Keffe D" Davis has long been known to investigators as one of four suspects identified early in the investigation. He isn't the accused gunman but was described as the group's ringleader by authorities Friday at a news conference and in court. In Nevada you can be charged with a crime, including murder, if you help someone commit the crime.

"Duane Davis was the shot caller for this group of individuals that committed this crime," said Las Vegas police homicide Lt. Jason Johansson, "and he orchestrated the plan that was carried out."

Davis himself has admitted in interviews and in his 2019 tell-all memoir, "Compton Street Legend," that he provided the gun used in the drive-by shooting.

Authorities said Friday that Davis' own public comments revived the investigation.



AP

Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson stands beside a photo of Duane "Keffe D" Davis during a news conference on an indictment in the 1996 murder of rapper Tupac Shakur, Friday, Sept. 29, 2023, in Las Vegas. Monitor is rear has name misspelled.

Davis, now 60, was arrested early Friday while on a walk near his home on the outskirts of Las Vegas, hours before prosecutors announced in court that a Nevada grand jury had indicted the self-described "gangster" on one count of murder with a deadly weapon. He is due in court next week.

The grand jury also voted to add a sentencing enhancement to the murder charge for gang activity that could add up to 20 additional years if he's convicted.

Hundreds of pages of transcripts released Friday provide a view into the first month of grand jury proceedings, which began in late July with testimony from former associates of Davis, friends of Shakur and a slate of retired police officers involved in the case early on. Their testimony painted a picture for the jurors of a deep, escalating rift between Shakur's music label Death Row Records and Bad Boy Records, which had ties to Davis and represented Shakur's rap rival, Biggie Smalls.

"It started the whole West Coast/East Coast" rivalry that primarily defined the hip-hop scene during the mid-1990s, one of Davis' former associates testified.

The first-ever arrest in the case came after Las Vegas police in mid-July raided Davis' home in the nearby city of Henderson for items they described at the time as "concerning the murder of Tupac Shakur."

Davis denied an interview request Friday from jail, and court records don't list an attorney who can comment on his behalf. Phone and text messages to Davis and his wife on Friday and in the months since the July 17 search weren't returned.

In a statement Friday, Sekyiwa "Set" Shakur, the rapper's sister, described the arrest as a victory.

"This is no doubt a pivotal moment. The silence of the past 27 years surrounding this case has spoken loudly in our community," she said. "It's important to me that the world, the country, the justice system, and our people acknowledge the gravity of the passing of this man, my brother, my mother's son, my father's son."

On the night of Sept. 7, 1996, Shakur was in a BMW driven by Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight. They were waiting at a red light near the Las Vegas Strip when a white Cadillac pulled up next to them and gunfire erupted.

Shakur was shot multiple times and died a week later at the age of 25.

Davis, in his memoir, said he was in the front passenger seat of the Cadillac and had slipped a gun into the back seat, from where he said the shots were fired.

He implicated his nephew, Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson, saying he was one of two people in the backseat. Anderson, a known rival of Shakur, had been involved in a casino brawl with the rapper shortly before the shooting.

Turkey's premier film festival canceled after documentary dispute

ISTANBUL (AP)—Turkey's oldest film festival has been canceled amid controversy surrounding a politically sensitive documentary about the aftermath of a 2016 coup attempt.

Antalya Mayor Muhittin Bocek announced the cancellation of the city's Golden Orange Film Festival on Friday night, a day after the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry withdrew its support for the event.

The ministry objected to the film "Kanun Hükmü" or "The Decree," a documentary which focuses on the hardships of a teacher and a doctor who were dismissed from their jobs following an attempted coup in Turkey on July 15, 2016.

"It is extremely sad that in such an important festival, the power of art is used to make propaganda for the FETO terrorist organization through the perception of victimhood," the Culture Ministry said in a statement.

FETO is an acronym the Turkish government uses for a movement led by U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom the government blames for the failed coup. Gulen denies any involvement. More than 130,000 alleged Gulen supporters in Turkey were fired from their jobs under emergency decrees declared after the military uprising.

The ministry said that it would "not be part of the effort to discredit the epic struggle of our beloved nation on July 15 and to use art as an element of provocation."

Mothers make own parents pay to see the grandkids

DEAR ABBY: I am the mother and stepmother of eight wonderful children. I love them all very much. The problem is my two oldest stepdaughters. Both are in their 20s with kids of their own. Unless their dad and I constantly give them money, we don't get to see our grandkids. Anytime we refuse, we don't get to see them for months at a time.

These two stepdaughters are rude to their dad. Unless it's almost a holiday or they need money, they never call or text him. If we disagree with anything they say, they don't bring the girls around for months or answer calls or texts.

We have given them a LOT of money, and we buy all the gifts for the kids. When we asked what the girls want for their birthdays, one stepdaughter said a dollhouse that cost almost $200, which is a lot for a birthday. When we said that seems more like a Christmas gift, she got upset.

I have told my husband that at this point I'm done and will no longer keep paying to see my grandkids, but he insists he's not giving up on the grandkids. I am not saying to "give up," but it breaks my heart to keep going through this. Any advice would be helpful.

MRS. ATM

DEAR MRS. ATM: How sad. Your stepdaughters (both!) aren't bothering to even be subtle about their emotional blackmail, which borders on elder abuse. The only way to break the cycle is to refuse to allow it. However, if your husband can't be convinced, there is nothing you can do to stop what's happening. Most clear-thinking individuals stop doing things that don't work once they wake up to that fact. But as long as your husband lets his emotions dictate his actions, nothing will change.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: For the last seven years, I have lived in an apartment with a strange next-door neighbor. I don't speak to her because, years ago, she got angry with me when someone left packages for her with me. The bags arrived open, and I assumed keeping them for her was OK. She was furious and accused me of looking inside. She added that "people don't usually give you all the things they were holding for you."

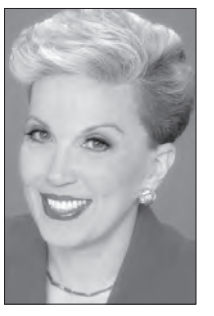
I was shocked and asked her how I could make up for my mistake, thinking I had overstepped being neighborly. Since then, she posts notes on her front door saying, "Do not leave my packages with my neighbor!"

Should I do something else to apologize? Send her a gift card? I did not—and never would—take anything of hers, but she must think I did. I'm afraid to speak to her, but I would like her to know that I'm not a bad person. Is that asking too much?

GENTLE SOUTHERN WOMAN

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR GENTLE: You did nothing you need to apologize for, so stop trying to win your neighbor's approval. She is someone to avoid as much as possible. She may have a paranoia problem that existed before she ever met you. Consider talking to the building manager about what happened. If you do, it may reassure you to know that you're not the only renter who has had problems with her. Sadly, this is a case of "no good deed goes unpunished."

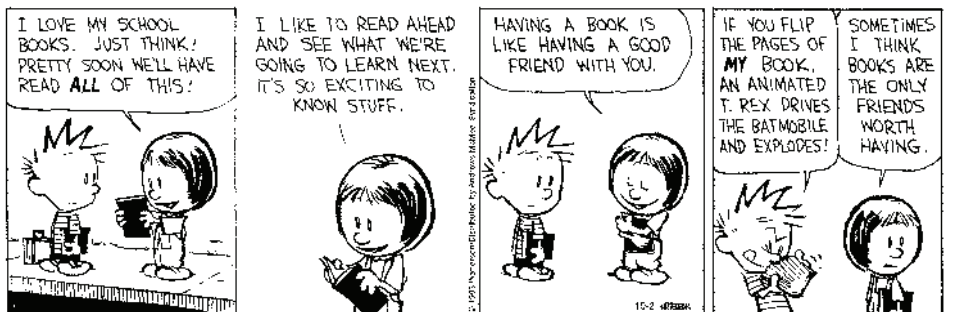
■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

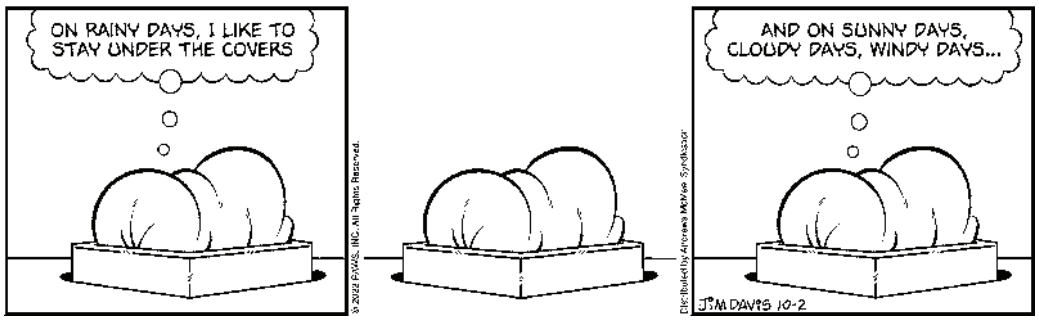
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I LOVE MY SCHOOL BOOKS. JUST THINK! PRETTY SOON WE'LL HAVE READ ALL OF THIS!
I LIKE TO READ AHEAD AND SEE WHAT WE'RE GOING TO LEARN NEXT. IT'S SO EXCITING TO KNOW STUFF.
HAVING A BOOK IS LIKE HAVING A GOOD FRIEND WITH YOU.
IF YOU FLIP THE PAGES OF MY BOOK, AN ANIMATED T. REX DRIVES THE BATMOBILE AND EXPLODES!
SOMETIMES I THINK BOOKS ARE THE ONLY FRIENDS WORTH HAVING.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

BLACK COFFEE?
NATCH.
WOULDN'T IT TASTE BETTER WITH CREAM AND SUGAR?
NOPE. IF I WANT DESSERT, I'LL HAVE ICE CREAM.
SO, YOU'RE A PURIST?
YES. A PURIST WHO'S NOW CRAVING ICE CREAM. GRAB YOUR JACKET.
10-2

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HEY, THAT DOG IS ABOUT TO PEE ON OUR HYDRANT. I DID THAT ALREADY!
NOW LOOK AT HIM RUNNING AWAY LIKE HE KNOWS HE DID SOMETHING HORRIBLE. HE VIOLATED OUR HYDRANT.
YOU THINK THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WOULD MIND IF WE INSTALLED RAZOR WIRE AROUND IT?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Hoe target
5 Make lace
8 Ump's call
12 Not busy
13 Eggs
14 Gator's kin
15 Incubator noise
16 Vinegar choice
18 Concert bonus
20 Social group
21 Couch
23 "Humbug!"
24 Cognac cocktails
28 Cat owner's ordeal
31 — -de-France
32 Turkish rug
34 Debtor's letters
35 Actress Jessica
37 Provided
39 Tulsa sch.
41 "JAG" spin-off
42 Potassium source
45 Roadside trash
49 "Big Night" actress Rossellini
51 Roof overhang
52 Playwright Simon
53 Miss Piggy's pronoun
54 Dutch cheese
55 Challenge
56 California's Big —
57 Oodles

DOWN
1 Use a squeegee
2 Genesis garden
3 Power co. supply
4 Take testimony from
5 "Considering all points of view ..."
6 Gardner of film
7 Body powder
8 Ornamental beetle
9 Comfy seat
10 Thwart
11 Caesar's "Behold!"
17 Bro or sis
19 Boulder
22 "Over the Rainbow" composer
24 "Chandelier" singer
25 Under the weather
26 Suave
27 "Main Street" author Lewis
29 Foot part
30 Paul Newman film
33 1502, in Old Rome
36 Fit for farming
38 Honor
40 French article
42 Predicament
43 On the Adriatic, say
44 Charitable donation
46 "I did it!"
47 Author Hunter
48 — Martin (cognac)
50 Brock of baseball

Solution time: 21 mins.

S	A	O		P	F	S	O		P	R	O	D
I	C	D		H	A	I	I		I	A	U	D
O	L	D	W	O	R	L	D		A	M	I	S
B	U	S	H	E	L		C	V	I			
			A	B	S		H	E	D	W	I	G
S	K	A	I	E		P	A	I		I	D	O
P	C	A	S		O	O	P		A	G	E	D
C	A	R		A	L	I		M	C	S	A	S
D	I	P	P	F	D		H	A	I			
			C	R	S		C	R	O	D	E	D
A	P	S	E		O	L	D	G	U	A	R	D
D	E	E	P		U	P	D	O		U	M	A
S	P	A	S		L	S	A	I		B	A	Y

Last Friday's Answer

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			17				
18				19		■	20					
■	■	■	21			22	■	23			■	■
24	25	26					27	■	28		29	30
31			■	32				33	■	34		
35			36	■	37				38			
■	■	39		40	■	41				■	■	■
42	43				44	■	45			46	47	48
49						50		■	51			
52				■	53				54			
55				■	56				57			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kelly Ripa, 53; Sting, 72; Annie Leibovitz, 74; Donna Karan, 75.

Happy Birthday: Check due dates, investments and health conditions. It's up to you to ensure everything is updated and working correctly. If you think outside the box, you'll come up with brilliant ideas that will save you money and time. Don't let what others do slow you down. Use your time wisely and focus on doing and being your best; you will make a difference. Your numbers are 8, 19, 24, 28, 33, 36, 45.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Expand your interests to include activities or reunions that can open doors to new adventures. Use your skills to make things happen, and you'll leave a lasting impression and make worthwhile connections. Personal growth, love and romance are on the rise. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Put more thought into updating and using your skills uniquely to get ahead. It's time to reinvent and position yourself for success. Don't let temptation stop you from putting your energy where it counts to reap the rewards you deserve. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Keep your thoughts to yourself and your eye on what's happening around you. An energetic approach to responsibilities will keep you out of trouble. A change you make at home will add to your comfort, convenience and peace of mind. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* If you show everyone how skilled you are, you'll gain support. Stay calm if someone tries to dictate your next move. The less friction, the better. Use your voice to generate interest from those offering support instead of negativity. An investment looks promising. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Be mindful of others, but don't let them dominate you. If you go about your business quietly, you'll avoid bossy people who think they know what's best for you. Speak up, especially when dealing with matters concerning your reputation and work ethic. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Consider the possibilities and follow your plans. A change will help you reach your goal and provide new and exciting opportunities. Refuse to let anyone interfere with your projects. Do what's best for you, and reap the rewards you deserve. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Tidy up loose ends, make your money work for you, digest your options and leave nothing to chance. Don't feel you must share your plans with everyone. Interference from outsiders will confuse you and play havoc with your timing. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Choose to use your brain, not brawn, and you'll get better results. Someone you meet or make plans with will offer insight into how best to make a difference or will have an impact on someone you cherish. Make stability a priority at home. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Listen, but don't let anyone fill your head with lies. Get the facts and recognize when someone or something isn't transparent. Trust your instincts and put your heart and soul into something meaningful and helpful to those you care about. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Downsize, declutter and simplify your life. Consider what's meaningful, and project a positive attitude of gratitude and kindness. Refuse to let anger set in or allow profit-driven ventures to consume you. Be resourceful, pitch in and help, and make a difference. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Stay active, do your part and pay attention to detail. Monitor a joint venture if you want to avoid loss. Someone you least expect will use persuasive tactics to convince you to do something unnecessary. Set boundaries and say no. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Your words will influence the people you encounter. Be aware of the impact you have, offer positive reinforcement and make honesty a priority. A relationship will take an emotional turn. Assess the situation before you decide on your next move. Protect your heart. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are dynamic, effective and self-sufficient. You are entertaining and generous.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

2		9			8			5
3				9	2		1	
	1		7				3	2
8				2		7		
			5		7		9	3
1	7	5	9		6		2	8
9	6							1
7					5	3	6	
		4		6	9	2	8	

Difficulty: ★ 10/2

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

5	6	8	9	7	2	1	4	3
7	4	1	3	6	8	5	2	9
9	3	2	4	5	1	8	6	7
6	2	4	1	9	3	7	5	8
1	8	7	5	2	6	9	3	4
3	9	5	7	8	4	6	1	2
4	7	6	2	1	9	3	8	5
2	1	9	8	3	5	4	7	6
8	5	3	6	4	7	2	9	1

Difficulty: ★★★★ 9/30

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

BLINDNESS CANES Solution: 9 letters

E	A	T	H	G	I	A	R	T	S	Ⓣ	Ⓘ	Ⓟ	Ⓢ	M
G	L	P	A	V	E	M	E	N	T	E	T	W	U	H
R	U	B	R	E	L	L	O	R	L	Y	N	H	P	T
A	M	I	I	I	N	S	T	E	P	I	T	S	P	Y
P	I	R	D	S	S	E	N	E	S	P	K	S	O	H
H	N	O	P	E	P	G	S	N	O	O	K	Y	R	R
I	U	U	L	E	T	A	O	O	O	I	T	L	T	D
T	M	T	D	H	N	I	L	H	L	E	C	A	E	T
E	O	E	V	I	T	C	E	L	F	E	R	T	S	A
S	B	S	L	C	G	V	I	A	O	O	E	E	M	C
O	I	T	E	I	L	I	S	L	T	C	L	M	O	T
U	L	R	V	R	I	S	R	K	T	H	A	D	C	I
N	I	E	A	C	D	U	L	L	A	B	G	N	S	L
D	T	E	R	L	E	A	P	R	A	C	T	I	C	E
S	Y	T	T	E	W	L	T	E	R	R	A	I	N	E

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Aluminum, Ball, Circle, Collapsible, COMS, Detect, Directions, Folds, Glide, Graphite, Guide, Hooks, In-step, Length, Lessons, Loop, Meta., Mobility, Night, Pavement, Pencil, Practice, Reflective, Rhythm, Rigid, Roller, Routes, Safety, Sensor, Skill, Sounds, Straight, Street, Support, Tactile, Terrain, Tips, Travel, Types, Visual, Walk

Last Friday's Answer: Formation

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Marlins, D-Backs, Rangers, Astros, Blue Jays all clinch berths on next-to-last day

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Jazz Chisholm hit his 19th home run, Josh Bell delivered a late two-run double and the Marlins clinched the fourth playoff berth in franchise history with a 7-3 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Saturday night.

The final five playoff berths were clinched Saturday by the Marlins, Rangers, Astros, Blue Jays and Diamondbacks. The field of 12 is now set, with only the first-round matchups to be decided Sunday.

A.J. Puk (7-5) and seven other relievers kept the Pirates in check, rendering any scoreboard-watching pointless.

Closer Tanner Scott wrapped up his 12th save by striking out the side in the ninth, setting off a celebration on the field and behind the Miami dugout, where a small clutch of fans chanted "Lets Go Marlins" in the ninth.

Jon Berti had three hits for the Marlins and started the go-ahead rally with a leadoff walk in the sixth off Quinn Priester (3-3), beginning a sequence that symbolized Miami's "whatever it takes" approach.

AP

Miami Marlins' Jazz Chisholm Jr., right, celebrates with the bat boy as he returns to the dugout after hitting a solo home run off Pittsburgh Pirates starting pitcher Quinn Priester during the third inning of a baseball game in Pittsburgh, Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023.

RANGERS 6, MARINERS 1

SEATTLE (AP)—Texas is back in the postseason for the first time since 2016, beating Seattle to clinch a playoff spot in the American League.

Texas can claim the AL West title and the No. 2 seed in the AL playoffs with a win over the Mariners in the regular-season finale or a loss by Houston at Arizona on Sunday.

The Rangers put together a four-run third inning against Luis Castillo, highlighted by two-out hits from Nathaniel Lowe, Jonah Heim and Leody Tavares that all plated runs.

ASTROS 1, DIAMONDBACKS 0

PHOENIX (AP)—Justin Verlander threw five innings, José Abreu hit a run-scoring double and Houston beat Arizona as both teams clinched spots in the upcoming playoffs.

The Astros still have plenty to play for Sunday — they could clinch the AL West and a first-round bye with a win on Sunday and a Texas loss.

Arizona's seeding could still change depending on Sunday's results, which also could determine whether the Marlins have to fly back to New York on Monday to finish a suspended game with the Mets.

RAYS 7, BLUE JAYS 5, 10 INNINGS

TORONTO (AP)—Toronto clinched a playoff spot despite its lost to Taylor Walls and Tampa Bay.

Walls lifted the Rays to a 6-4 lead with a two-run single off Jordan Hicks (3-9) with two out in the 10th. Junior Caminero then drove in Raimel Tapia with an infield single.

Rays right-hander Chris Devenski (6-4) pitched two innings for the win, working around Bo Bichette's RBI double in the 10th.

Blue Jays starter Hyun Jin Ryu allowed two runs and seven hits in three innings in his shortest start of the season.

BRAVES 5, NATIONALS 3

ATLANTA (AP)—Marcell Ozuna hit a go-ahead, three-run homer in the fifth inning, Spencer Strider shook off a shaky first inning to get his 20th win and major league-leading Atlanta beat Washington.

Strider, the MLB leader in strikeouts and victories, got off to a rough start with a 36-pitch, three-run first inning. He settled down to finish with seven strikeouts on 94 pitches — 57 strikes — in five innings.

ORIOLES 5, RED SOX 2

BATLIMORE (AP)—Ryan Mountcastle hit a tiebreaking double in the seventh inning and scored on an infield hit to lead AL East champion Baltimore over last-place Boston for its 101st win.

Baltimore (101-60), which hosts an AL Division Series starting Oct. 7, is finishing its winningest season since going 102-57 in 1979.

After Kutter Crawford allowed one hit in six innings, Josh Winckowski (4-4) gave up a single to Adley Rutschman leading off the seventh. Pinch-runner Jorge Mateo stole second standing up, and Mountcastle doubled to right with two outs for a 1-0 lead.

GIANTS 2, DODGERS 1

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Clayton Kershaw lost for the first time since May, allowing the go-ahead run when Max Muncy misplayed a potential inning-ending double-play grounder in a 2-1 defeat to San Francisco that left Los Angeles one win shy of 100 going into their season finale.

Kershaw (13-5), a 35-year-old three-time Cy Young Award winner, had been 7-0 with a 1.96 ERA in 13 starts since a May 21 loss at St. Louis. Facing the Giants for the 59th time, he allowed a third-inning homer to Tyler Fitzgerald and gave up two runs and five hits in 5 1/3 innings.

CUBS 10, BREWERS 6

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Yan Gomes hit a grand slam, but Chicago was eliminated from postseason contention during its victory over Milwaukee.

Chicago's game was going into the eighth inning when Miami secured an NL wild card and knocked the Cubs out of the playoff race.

Chicago spent the top of the first inning taking out its frustration on Eric Lauer (4-6), who was making his first major league appearance since May 20 with the NL Central champion Brewers resting their top starting pitchers.

On Lauer's third pitch, Christopher Morel hit a 431-foot drive over the wall in left. Lauer walked three of his next four batters before Gomes connected for his 10th homer. Two batters later, Patrick Wisdom homered to right-center to make it 6-0.

TWINS 14, ROCKIES 6

DENVER (AP)—Trevor Larnach hit his first career grand slam, one of Minnesota's four home runs, and the playoff-bound Twins beat Colorado.

Edouard Julien had three hits, including his 16th home run, and Max Kepler and Matt Wallner also went deep for AL Central Division champion Minnesota.

Elehuris Montero, Sean Bouchard and Brenton Doyle homered for the Rockies (58-103), who will not win at least 60 games for the first time in the club's 31-season history.

Chris Paddock (1-0) gave up two hits and struck out four in three complete innings, his longest outing since going 5 1/3 innings on May 2, 2022, which was the last time he recorded a win.

METS 4, PHILLIES 3, GAME 1
METS 11, PHILLIES 4, GAME 2

NEW YORK (AP) — Francisco Álvarez drove in a career-high six runs with his first big league grand slam and a two-run homer Saturday night, powering New York to a doubleheader sweep of playoff-bound Philadelphia.

Mets right-hander Tylor Megill unveiled his attempt at throwing Kodai Senga's Ghost Fork in the opener, when he threw a career-high 7 1/3 innings in a 4-3 victory.

Álvarez, who sat out the opener, hit a two-run homer off the signage along the second deck in left field to cap a three-run second against Michael Plassmeyer (0-1).

Plassmeyer, pitching for the Phillies for the first time since Oct. 5, surrendered 10 runs—nine earned—in 3 2/3 innings.

Reed Garrett (1-0) struck out four over three innings to earn his first big league win.

Megill, whose previous high was seven innings against the Yankees in September 2021, gave up four hits and struck out seven in the opener. The right-hander threw a handful of split-fingered fastballs he learned from the Mets' Rookie of the Year contender, using the pitch to strike out Cristian Pache in the third and retire Brandon Marsh on a grounder in the fifth.

Megill (9-8) said he didn't want to use the pitch in a game until he was pitching with a healthy lead, which the Mets provided by scoring four times in the first two innings against Taijuan Walker (15-6).

CARDINALS 15, REDS 6

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Cincinnati's bid to become just the third team to make the playoffs following a 100-loss season ended in game No. 161 when they were eliminated during the seventh inning of a loss to St. Louis.

Elly De La Cruz had just grounded out for the final out of the top of the seventh when the Marlins beat Pittsburgh to clinch a wild-card berth.

Connor Phillips (1-1) lasted just 12 pitches—all balls. After his walks to Tommy Edman, Paul Goldschmidt and Lars Nootbar, Jordan Walker lined a two-run double on an 0-2 pitch from Fernando Cruz. Rookie Iván Herrera hit a two-run double and scored on rookie Luken Baker's double for a 5-0 lead.

Nootbar hit a three-run homer in the second off Cruz, and rookie José Fermín's two-run double against Buck Farmer boosted the lead to 10-0. Paul Goldschmidt drove in a run in the third with his second double.

YANKEES 5, ROYALS 2

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Frankie Montas earned the win out of the bullpen in his season debut for New York, which clinched its 31st straight winning season with one game to spare.

Montas (1-0) retired four batters while allowing two hits and a walk. He left with one out and runners on second and third in the sixth inning, but Greg Weissert promptly struck out Nick Pratto and Maikel Garcia to end the threat.

Clay Holmes pitched a perfect ninth for his 24th save in 27 chances.

Alec Marsh (3-9) replaced opener Steven Cruz and allowed three runs on six hits and three walks over 4 1/3 innings for Kansas City, which fell to 55-106 and matched the 2005 team for the most losses in a season in club history.

PADRES 6, WHITE SOX 1

CHICAGO (AP)—Ha-Seong Kim had four hits to lead San Diego over Chicago, which lost 100 games for the first time since 2018.

Michael Wacha (14-4) struck out seven, walked one and allowed three hits over seven scoreless innings as the Padres, who were eliminated from playoff contention Friday, moved to above .500 (81-80) for the first time since May 10.

Jurickson Profar had two hits and drove in four runs and Ji Man Choi added a pair of hits, his first with San Diego.

Mike Clevinger (9-9) was roughed up for six runs in 1 2/3 innings against his former team.

Lenyn Sosa homered off Ray Kerr in the eighth for the White Sox, who reached 100 losses for the fifth time. They joined Oakland and Kansas City to give AL three 100-loss teams.

TIGERS 8, GUARDIANS 0

DETROIT (AP)—Miguel Cabrera followed a pregame retirement celebration by scoring the first run and driving in another, helping Detroit beat Cleveland to clinch second place in the AL Central.

The start of the game was delayed 33 minutes by the retirement celebration of Cabrera, the 40-year-old, 12-time All-Star who is playing his 21st and last big league season.

Guardians starter Tristan McKenzie (0-3) gave up one run, three hits and three walks in 4 1/3 innings.

Beau Brieske (2-3), the third of seven Tigers pitchers, allowed one hit over 2 1/3 innings as Detroit pitched its ninth shutout. Cleveland was blanked for the 13th time.

ATHLETICS 7, ANGELS 3

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP)—Shea Langeliers hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the Athletics' five-run eighth inning, leading Oakland over Los Angeles.

Zack Gelof homered and added two late RBI singles for the 111-loss A's, who earned their fourth victory in 16 games on the penultimate day of their franchise's worst season since 1916.

Gelof hit his 14th homer in the first inning off Angels opener Andrew Wantz. He added run-scoring singles in the eighth and ninth innings for his first career three-RBI game.

Logan O'Hoppe hit a two-run homer in the Angels' three-run seventh off Joe Boyle (2-0), who had thrown six hitless innings for Oakland in his third big league appearance.

Montgomery runs wild as Lions beat Packers to take early command of NFC North

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP)—David Montgomery never beat the Green Bay Packers during his four seasons with the Chicago Bears.

Now with a different NFC North team, Montgomery made the most of his new situation and helped the Detroit Lions take early command of the division with a 34-20 victory at Lambeau Field on Thursday night.

"It just felt real different coming in with the group of guys that I'm with," said Montgomery, who rushed for 121 yards and three touchdowns. "I'm blessed to come out here with these guys and get the 'dub.' That's big for me. I can tell my son that I beat the Packers, so I'm excited to say that and excited to be a part of this team."

Montgomery carried the ball 32 times after sitting out the Lions' victory over the Atlanta Falcons on Sunday with a thigh bruise. He became the first Lion to rush for three touchdowns at Green Bay and the first Detroit player to top 100 yards rushing with three TDs since James Stewart in 2000.

"He was balling," Lions receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown said. "We can count on him whenever. Give him the ball, he's going to make something happen."

The Lions (3-1) beat the Packers (2-2) for a fourth straight time, a streak that also includes the final game of last season, when Detroit denied Green Bay a playoff spot in Aaron Rodgers' last game with the Packers.

Detroit has built on the momentum from that season-ending victory by getting off to a fast start this year that now includes road victories over the Packers and the reigning Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs.

"Send us anywhere, line us up against anyone and we feel like we can go in there and beat them," said Lions quarterback Jared Goff, who went 19 of 28 for 210 yards with a touchdown and an interception. "That's a good feeling to have."

Rodgers' replacement, Jordan Love, threw for a touchdown and ran for another as he tried to rally the Packers in the second half. He finished 23 of 36 for 246 yards and had two passes intercepted by Jerry Jacobs.

Detroit led 27-3 at halftime and had outgained Green Bay 284 yards to 21 as the half ended with boos from the crowd. It was the Lions' highest-scoring first half against the Packers in the series' 188-game history.

The Packers had staged an improbable rally earlier in the week, trailing New Orleans 17-0 on Sunday before scoring 18 points in the final 11 minutes for a one-point victory.

Green Bay faced a halftime deficit of at least 17 points in back-to-back weeks for the first time in franchise history. This time, it was too much to overcome.

"I think just offensively as a whole we've just got to start faster," Love said. "We don't start fast and we kind of get behind and it's hard running the ball. We get put in situations where you've got to throw the ball. So I think we've just got to start faster."

Love got the Packers within 10 points. His 1-yard touchdown pass to Christian Watson capped a season-long 86-yard drive to open the second half.

Jayden Reed ended the third quarter with a 44-yard catch that set up Love's 9-yard touchdown run with 14:52 left in the game to make it 27-17.

Detroit responded with a 14-play, 75-yard drive, capped by Montgomery's 1-yard touchdown run on fourth-and-goal, that took nearly nine minutes off the clock and put the game away.

The Lions were prepared to settle for a 30-yard field goal that would have kept it as a two-score game, but they got a first down when Green Bay's Quay Walker received an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for running forward and leaping across the line in an attempt to block the kick.

"I was just in the moment, but I've got to be aware," Walker said. "That's on me."

Considering the way the game started, it was surprising it was still competitive in the fourth quarter.

Rudy Ford intercepted Goff on the third play from scrimmage to set up a field goal. Detroit then scored 24 points on its next four drives to delight the sizeable contingent of Lions fans who decorated the Lambeau Field stands in Honolulu blue.

Goff's 24-yard touchdown pass to a wide-open St. Brown put the Lions ahead for good. Montgomery scored on runs of 3 and 2 yards, while Riley Patterson kicked field goals of 33 and 37 yards.

The second quarter was nearly halfway over and the Lions already led 24-3 when the Packers finally got their initial first down thanks to a Detroit penalty. The Packers didn't get a first down on their own merits until 7 seconds remained before halftime.

Lions' Brian Branch injured his ankle in the third quarter, later returned to the game and then went down again. CB Chase Lucas left with an illness in the first half.

Packers tight-end Luke Musgrave sustained a concussion in the first half. CB Jaire Alexander (back) and LG Elgton Jenkins (knee) were out for a second straight game, and LT David Bakhtiari (knee) missed a third straight game. Bakhtiari was placed on injured reserve earlier Thursday, meaning he must miss at least the next three games.

AP

Detroit Lions running back David Montgomery (5) celebrates after a 2-yard touchdown run during the first half of an NFL football game against the Green Bay Packers, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023, in Green Bay, Wis.

Judge says she is ending conservatorship between Michael Oher, Memphis couple

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—A Tennessee judge said Friday she is ending a conservatorship agreement between former NFL player Michael Oher and a Memphis couple who took him in when he was in high school, but the highly-publicized dispute over financial issues will continue.

Shelby County Probate Court Judge Kathleen Gomes said she is terminating the agreement reached in 2004 that allowed Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy to control Oher's finances. Oher signed the agreement when he was 18 and living with the couple as he was being recruited by colleges as a star high school football player. Their story is the subject of the film "The Blind Side, which earned Sandra Bullock an Oscar.

Gomes said she was not dismissing the case. Oher has asked that the Tuohys provide a financial accounting of money that may have come to them as part of the agreement, claiming that they used his name, image and likeness to enrich themselves and lied to him that the agreement meant the Tuohys were adopting him.

In Tennessee, a conservatorship removes power from a person to make decisions for themselves, and it is often used in the case of a medical condition or disability.

But Oher's conservatorship was approved "despite the fact that he was over 18 years old and had no diagnosed physical or psychological disabilities," his petition said.

Gomes said she was disturbed that such an agreement was ever reached. She said she had never seen in her 43-year career a conservatorship agreement reached with someone who was not disabled.

"I cannot believe it got done," she said.

Oher and Tuohys listened in by video conference call but did not speak. Lawyers for both parties had agreed that the agreement should end, but the case will continue to address Oher's claims. Gomes said it should have ended long ago.

In August, Oher, 37, filed a petition in probate court accusing the Tuohys of lying to him by having him sign papers making them his conservators rather than his adoptive parents nearly two decades ago. Oher wanted the conservatorship to be terminated, a full accounting of the money earned off his name and story and to be paid what he is due, with interest.

He accused the couple of falsely representing themselves as his adoptive parents, saying he discovered in February the conservatorship agreed to in 2004 was not the arrangement he thought it was — and that it provided him no familial relationship to them.

Oher claims the Tuohys have kept him in the dark about financial dealings related to his name, image and likeness during the 19-year life of the agreement.

The Tuohys have called the claims they enriched themselves at his expense outlandish, hurtful and absurd and part of a "shakedown" by Oher.

In a court filing, the affluent couple said they loved Oher like a son and provided him with food, shelter, clothing and cars while he lived with them, but denied saying they intended to legally adopt him.

The Tuohys' filing said Oher referred to them as "mom and dad," and they occasionally referred to Oher as a son. They acknowledged that websites show them referring to Oher as an adopted son, but the term was only used "in the colloquial sense and they have never intended that reference to be viewed with legal implication."

The Tuohys said the conservatorship was the tool chosen to comply with NCAA rules that would have kept Oher from attending the University of Mississippi, where Sean Tuohy had been a standout basketball player.

"When it became clear that the Petitioner could not consider going to the University of Mississippi ("Ole Miss") as a result of living with the Respondents, the NCAA made it clear that he could attend Ole Miss if he was part of the Tuohy family in some fashion," the Tuohys' Sept. 14 court filing said.

The Tuohys also said Oher lied about finding out that he was not adopted in February. They said Oher's 2011 book "I Beat the Odds" indicates that he was fully aware that the Tuohys were appointed as conservators.

Agents negotiated a small advance for the Tuohys from the production company for "The Blind Side," based on a book written by Sean Tuohy's friend, Michael Lewis, the couple's lawyers have said. That included "a tiny percentage of net profits" divided equally among a group that included Oher, they said.

The attorneys said they estimated each of the Tuohys and Oher received $100,000 apiece, and the couple paid taxes on Oher's portion for him.

The Tuohys' filing said they never signed any pro football contracts for Oher, and he was happy with their financial arrangements from "The Blind Side."

Oher was the 23rd overall pick in the 2009 draft out of Mississippi, and he spent his first five seasons with the Baltimore Ravens, where he won a Super Bowl. He played 110 games over eight NFL seasons, including 2014 when he started 11 games for the Tennessee Titans. Oher finished his career with the Carolina Panthers.

Tinian, Rota lasses rack up wins in girls HS v-ball

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

During the two-day stint when Tinian and Rota high school girls' teams made their way to Saipan to play in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2023-2024, they put their short trip to good use as they won some of their games against Saipan's high school teams.

Tinian High School's varsity team galloped to four victories from last Friday to last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

They first won against Kagman High School, 25-19, then bested MHS, 28-26, last Friday. Last Saturday, they heavily defeated Saipan International School, 25-15, and beat Mount Carmel School, 25-20.

As for their losses, they lost to Grace Christian Academy, 13-25; lost a close one to Saipan Southern High School, 24-26; and fought to the end against Agape Christian School, 27-29.

THS' junior varsity team fell short and lost all their matchups. They lost to KHS II, 19-25; fell to MHS III, 21-25; was overpowered by MHS II, 9-25; came up short against MCS II, 23-25; was defeated by SSHS II 16-26; was silenced by ACS II, 9-25; and lost a close one to SIS II, 25-27.

On the other hand, Rota's Dr. Rita H. Inos High School girls varsity team won just one game, while their junior varsity team bagged four wins.

The varsity Bucks' one win was against SSHS, 25-23. They ended up losing to SIS, 17-25; 29-29 against MHS; 16-25 against KHS; 7-25 against ACS; 23-25 against SSHS; 27-25 against GCA; and 18-25 against MCS.

The JV Bucks first won against Mount Carmel School II, 25-17; they slipped past MHS III, 27-25; edged SIS II, 25-22; and overpowered SSHS II, 25-13.

Stallions' head coach, Dionne Santos said this year's level of competition is "definitely higher than it has been in previous years. I've been coaching for a long time and it just keeps leveling up every year."

With Tinian and Rota teams only playing twice out of the whole season, Santos said "We always go into it blind. That's one of the things we prepare for when it comes to practice is always just developing their skills and then when it comes to next season, we know who we're up against. We just go back with that knowledge and try to pivot that around what we need to do."

LEIGH GASES

Rota's Dr. Rita H. Inos High School varsity and junior varsity teams pose for a photo with their head coach Deseriee Pendergrass, far left, after a game in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2023-2024 last Saturday morning at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

LEIGH GASES

Tinian High School's Abbygaile Ong goes for a jump serve against Mount Carmel School in their NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2023-2024 game last Saturday morning at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

LEIGH GASES

Tinian High School's varsity team poses for a photo with their head coach Dionne Santos, second from right, after their win against Mount Carmel School in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2023-2024 game last Saturday morning at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

THS varsity team includes Abbygaile Ong, Karisse Ong, Clarize Rodriguez, Bernadette Fleming, Yeong Chae Yoon, Julia Medicielo, Dennise Miguel, Rchie Lagunay, Mary Gomez, Kyra Adriano, Sophia Su, and Jazmine Furton.

Their JV team consists of Carrika San Nicolas, Xing Yi Lin, Quinani Cruz, Keyanie Arriola, Mary Grace Calacsan, Draeshia Manglona, Becky Reyes, Katie Dela Cruz, Serenity Guzman, Journey Reyes, Ysabella Lenteja, and Janna Mapeso.

The Bucks, coached by Deseriee Pendergrass, for their part said, "Staying on Rota, we're very limited but our girls are fighting really hard. They work really hard. It's a very new experience for them with a big crowd and in an actual gym, so they're doing really, really well."

With no indoor facility to practice in back home, they still try to get as much practice as they can despite the rainy season. But, Pendergrass said, her girls are "resilient, they work hard, and we try to model teamwork."

The Bucks' varsity team is made up of Wynette Ogo, Brynn Atalig, Ellie Ogo, Kaypeonie Mendiola, Denicia Lizama, Kahra Songsong, Abcde Hocog, and Fervelyn Luis.

The Bucks' junior varsity team includes Sophia Songsong, Tolia Quitugua, Fervelyn Luis, Niana Barcinas, Abcde Hocog, Dariann Lizama, Resolanda Patricio, Kaypeonie Mendiola, Wynette Ogo, Denicia Lizama, and Brynn Atalig.

In last Thursday's games, ACS II won over SSHS II, 21-15, 21-15; MHS II powered past KHS II, 21-15, 21-10; MCS won against SSHS, 21-19, 21-12; MHS III beat MCS II, 21-15, 21-10; GCA trounced SIS, 21-19, 21-11; and MHS beat KHS, 21-13, 21-9.

MELVIN

From page 20

mance this season, "I think this year, my riding is way more up there. It was a good year for me." He recalled that he wiped out just once this season and was happy that it was just that one time.

Even as an older rider, Cepeda said he still plans on competing aboard his trusty Yamaha YZ250f. He said he knows that young riders look up to him and plans to continue showing them that even older people can still ride.

Cepeda works at Hyatt Regency Saipan and joked that hopefully one day they can sponsor him. He then thanked MRA "for all their hard work. Thanks to the whole MRA family. I appreciate all the support."

He then dedicated his win to his wife, Eleanor, who is secretary of MRA's board. Cepeda said, "she's one of my biggest supporters… She bought me my bike."

MRA president Charles Cepeda said they chose "Iron Man" as the Rider of the Year because of his endurance on the track—hence the new moniker. He did a couple of races in Guam—three heats, one after the other and he did very well, said Cepeda.

Not only that, Charles added that "Iron Man" won a podium finish for two out of his three races, so he believes he deserves the title as Rider of the Year.

"Iron Man," said Charles, is one of the riders "who just comes to race, rides, practice, doesn't complain—not that complaining is bad—but he just comes and enjoys the ride. He's a long-time motocross rider—I've raced and rode with him before and I can see he really enjoys motocross racing."

As for why he's also called "The Whip," Melvin Cepeda got it because whenever he does jumps on his bike he whips the back to the side in style.

Winners of the other classes of the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series will be published in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

TEAM

From page 20

Jack Lizama, and Coby Santos. Schmidt stayed true to his moniker of "Spyder" as the ball stuck to him like flies in a spider's web and made 15 of the teams' points.

Basa assisted with his 6 points as their team held down JD Elite.

In the women's division, The Injured List made up of Connie Camacho, Antonette Labausa, Lia Rangamar, and Irish Pagarao, won a close 19-15 finals matchup against M&M's.

It was a rough-and-tumble game as free throws were made left and right from both teams. The Injured Lists' Pagarao and Labausa led the team with their 6 points each, while all except 2 points were made from the free throw line by the M&M's.

Third place went to U17.1 as they defeated Upsetting, 21-10.

As a precursor to the upcoming Marianas Arsenal 3X3 Basketball Series this month, tournament chair Joe Villacrusis said that the turnout was small, but "at least we got a good view of how the 3X3 tournament should be coordinated. For me too, this is my first time and we learned a lot of things."

"This time around, we only did one court, but the plan is for the coming series, we're going to use both courts," he said. "But overall, I think everyone had fun and I think the women really put on a great show more than the men."

So far, there are three men's teams for the October tourney and no women's team yet, but Villacrusis is hoping that the number will grow later.

He said they're checking to tweak the requirements for the upcoming tourney and said that "we want to tell everyone that even if they don't want to qualify to go to the Asia Cup, they can still participate and have fun."

Marianas Arsenal 3X3 Basketball Pre-Series was organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation.

LEIGH GASES

The Injured Lists' Connie Camacho gets rejected by M&M's Madeleine Alegre during the finals of the women's division in the Marianas Arsenal 3X3 Basketball Pre-Series last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

FMS

From page 20

3-pointer by Jairus Pangelinan lengthened their lead over DMS.

DMS' Dane Tibayan tried to keep them close with 4 points and with the help from Rodney Tomei Jr., U-Gene Arriola, and Jaden Andrew, but FMS led 18-10 at the end of the first half.

The second half only made the Napu Riders stronger as they rode on their big lead from the first half. DMS was shut down entirely as they made only four more points, contrasting FMS' 15-point second half run.

FMS' lopsided win was led by Andrei Tenorio and Keith Agulto's 6 points, followed by John, Jairus Pangelinan, and John Rebuenog's 5 markers each.

In other results, Hopwood Middle School trounced Tanapag Middle School, 38-16; Mount Carmel School bashed HMS JV, 48-18; Cha-Cha Ocean View Middle School silenced Saipan Community School, 52-9; and Agape Christian School overpowered MCS JV, 43-12.

FMS 33 – Tenorio 6, Agulto 6, John 5, Rebuenog 5, Pangelinan 5, Duenas 3, Camacho 2, Gimed 1.

DMS 14 – Tibayan 4, Arriola 4, Andrew 3, Tomei Jr. 3.

Marlins, D-Backs, Rangers, Astros, Blue Jays all clinch berths on next-to-last day.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Tinian, Rota lasses rack up wins in girls HS v-ball.

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Melvin 'Iron Man' Cepeda is Rider of the Year

LEIGH GASES
Melvin Cepeda holds up his Rider of the Year award as he is cheered on by Marianas Racing Association board members during the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series awards banquet last Saturday at the Saipan World Resort.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Veteran rider Melvin "The Whip" Cepeda was awarded the coveted Marianas Racing Association Rider of the Year plaque and apparently a new sobriquet during the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series awards banquet last Saturday at the Saipan World Resort.

During an interview after the banquet, "Iron Man" couldn't hold back his emotions as his eyes teared up when asked how he felt about winning the award. While seemingly lost for words, the soon to be 53-year-old said that he was overwhelmed and did not expect to win it at all.

Perks of being a veteran rider (40-years-old and up), he said, is that they get to join in on all the races—Novice, Intermediate, Expert, and Veterans class. Cepeda did just that this season and bagged podium finishes—second in the Veterans Class and third in the Intermediate Class. He also made the Top 5 in the Expert Class.

Cepeda said of his perfor-

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Team Nesian Built, The Injured List rules 3X3 Pre-Series

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Team Nesian Built topped the men's division, while The Injured List ruled the women's division of the Marianas Arsenal 3X3 Basketball Pre-Series from last Thursday to last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Nesian Built defeated JD Elite, 21-12, in the finals, while third place went to The Hoops with a forfeit by The Game.

Nesian Built consisted of Preston Basa, Douglas Schmidt,

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LEIGH GASES
Participants of the women's division in the Marianas Arsenal 3X3 Basketball Pre-Series pose for a photo after the finals game between The Injured List and M&M's last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

FMS still undefeated, drenches DMS, 33-14

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Defending champions Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Napu Riders is still undefeated in the IT&E Interscholastic Boys Middle School Basketball League 2023-2024 as they drenched DanDan Middle School Tottots, 33-14, last Wednesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Napu Riders continue their dominance in the middle school basketball stage with their fourth consecutive win this season. Against the Totttots, they sprinted out of the starting jump ball and immediately sank a 3-pointer by way of Kevin John.

The Tottots struggled to keep possession through the game as Napu Riders' quick hands and feet allowed them to do the opposite and bank shot after shot. John scored 2 more points and another

See FMS on Page 19

LEIGH GASES
Francisco M. Sablan Middle School's Leon Duenas attempts to drive to the basket as he's guarded by DanDan Middle School's Jaden Andrew during their game in the IT&E Interscholastic Boys Middle School Basketball League 2023-2024 last Wednesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.